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## THERA-THERĪ-GĀTHĀ

### **True Life Stories of Vibrant Buddhist Monks and Nuns of the Buddha's day**

Thera-Therī-Gāthā or Elders' Verses [Utterances of Venerable Monks and Nuns] are the collected metrical compositions in Pali, relating to the lives of Buddhist disciples, both men and women [most of them being of the Buddha's day], describing their day to day lives, their triumphant spiritual attainments and at times, the bitter experiences they have been through in life. These two collections are Buddhist religious poetry of inestimable value, looking almost like a gallery of exquisitely carved marbles. They are believed to cover, according to several reliable Buddhist scholars, roughly a period of nearly three hundred years from the time of the Buddha. This we say with certainty that these biographies in the Thera and Therī Gāthā collections make models of what Buddhist monks and nuns should be for all times. There is hardly ever in them a blurred image.

In the history of Pali Buddhist literature, the Thera-Therī-Gāthā are contained in the Khuddaka Nikāya which is the fifth group in the major division of Pali Buddhist literature known under the name of Dhamma, and includes all teachings of doctrinal importance. This is how it came to be classified at the joint recital of the First Buddhist Council or *Pañcasatī Saṅgīti. Eten'eva upāyena pañca nikāye pucchi.* [Foot note 1. See Vin. II. 287]. The other major division of Buddhist teachings pertaining to Buddhist monastic discipline was rehearsed at this same

rectal under the name of Vinaya: *Eten'eva upāyena ubhato Vinaye pucchi*. [loc. cit.]. For further details, see Sumaṅgalavilāsinī of Buddhaghosa [i.e. Dīgha Nikāya Commentary] where he accepts this unassailable Canonical evidence as recorded in the Vinaya Piṭaka [*Vinayapiṭake tantim ārūlhā* DA. I. p. 2].

These two, i.e. Dhamma and Vinaya, obviously indicate the major contents of the Buddha's teachings known to the early Buddhist disciples like Thera Mahā Kassapa at the time of the First Recital. Buddhaghosa himself says the following. *Vuttaṃ etaṃ Bhagavatā `Yo vo Ānanda mayā dhammo ca vinayo ca desito paññatto so vo mamaccayena satthā'ti*. [loc. cit. p. 3] = 'This has been said by the Buddha: Whatever Dhamma and Vinaya has been preached and laid down by me, that shall be your Master after my demise'. These two divisions are latterly referred to as Sutta and Vinaya Piṭakas respectively by the time Buddhist literature came to be classified under three heads, including a third division under the name of Abhidhamma. It is also to be noted that as the very name Khuddaka [miniature] suggests, this fifth *nikāya* [of Sutta Piṭaka contents] contains many of the independent poetical compositions of Buddhist literature like the Suttanipāta, Dhammapada and Thera and Therī Gāthā.

The Theragāthā consists of 1279 verses in the PTS edition and 1291 verses in the Buddha Jayanti Sinhala script edition. The Therī-gāthā has 522 verses in the PTS edition and 521 verses in the Buddha Jayanti Sinhala script edition. In both texts, subdivisions are also noted in terms of Nipātas and Vaggas, collections being arranged according to the increasing number of verses. The longest Theragāthā is that of Elder Vaṅgīsa, consisting of 70 verses [vv. 1209 - 1279] and that of the Therīgāthā being the collection of Therī Sumedhā with 74 verses [vv. 448 - 522]. We owe grateful thanks to Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids and Professor K.R. Norman who have translated the Thera and Therī Gāthā and made excellent studies on them.

## Thera-Gāthā

Let us now peep a little into the vast treasure house of Buddhist thinking and living as revealed in these two great collections. We will begin with the Theras. The Buddha is undoubtedly our Master and Guide. The Buddha himself picked out Elder Mahā Kassapa as a senior member of the community to show the Buddhist way of living to fellow members. We shall begin with him. We meet him as an enlightened one who has reached his goal, already referred to as *kata-kicco anāsavo*, i.e. one who has accomplished his task and freed himself of all defilements. He epitomizes self-discipline as the true way to liberation from the ills of life which is to be achieved in Nirvana. Saintliness in Buddhism, he indicates, requires moving away from the maddening crowd. `Do not go about followed by the crowd. It disturbs one's inner peace and tranquility': *na gaṇena purakkhato care vimano hoti samādhi dullabho*. [Thag. v. 1051]. As one who has renounced and left behind life in the household, his advice to fellow members is to leave what one has renounced at a respectable distance. Associate not families too closely: *Na kulāni upabbaje muni*. Respectful reception in the midst of families [*yā'yaṃ vandana-pūjanā kulesu*] is to be looked upon as a mire in which one can sink and perish [*paṅko'ti naṃ avedayum*].

On the other hand, one who has left the household must look out for far greater delight in the new life chosen, creating for one-self a new environment. We discover in Thera Tālapuṭa one such courageous pursuant of the monastic ideal of renunciation, attempting to blend one-self with the total environment around one-self. He wishes to see no difference between the trees, creepers and the grass around him and his bodily aggregates. This is how he would like to feel.

*Kadā nu kaṭṭhe ca tiṇe latā ca khandhe ime'haṃ amīte ca dhamme  
ajjhattikān'eva ca bāhirāni samaṃ tuleyyaṃ tadidaṃ kadā me.*

Thag. v. 1101

When will I see no difference between the bodily aggregates and the

other constituents of which I am made and the wood of the trees, the grass and the creepers, things which are both external and internal? When will I see them both as being not dis-similar [*samaṃ tuleyyaṃ*]?

Translated by the author

Rain and wind is not to deter his movements. Being drenched in an unexpected downpour of rain as he treads along the path of his ancient seers is a source of delight that he now looks forward to. With such attitudinal changes to the world one lives in, a Buddhist mendicant is bound to move in the world one lives in, without being enticed and trapped by sensory stimuli. Hear what he says:

*Kadā nu maṃ pāvusakāla-megho navena toyena sacīvaraṃ vane  
isippayātaṃhi pathe vajantaṃ ovassate tan nu kadā bhavissati.*

op. cit. v. 1102

When will the cloud of the rainy season, with its fresh water, suddenly drench me in my robes, as I tread the path taken by the sages of yore? When will that be?

Translated by the author

This de-conditioning of the mind of the Buddhist disciple is something to be undertaken and aspired for on a long term basis. This alone gives the mind the correct attitude and approach or *yoniso manasi-kāra*. Nāgasamāla Thera, once on his alms round, saw a glamorously clad girl dancing to music in the street. It was no less than a trap laid out by Mara, the Evil One.

*Alaṅkatā suvasanā mālinī candanussadā  
majjhe mahāpathe nārī turiye naccati nāṭakī.  
Piṇḍikāya pavitṭho' haṃ gacchanto naṃ adakkhisam  
alaṅkataṃ suvasanaṃ maccu-pāsaṃ'va oḍḍitaṃ*

op. cit. vv. 267-268

Well clad and glamorously decked with sandal paste and flowers,  
a dancing girl was dancing to music on the middle of the high-way.  
Out on my alms round I did see her, well clad and decked,  
comparable unto a death-trap, well laid out.

Translated by the author

*tato me manasikāro yoniso udapajjatha  
ādīnavo pāturahū nibbidā samatitthata.*

op. cit. v. 269

There upon a correct attitude of mind dawned upon me.  
The evil that comes on its way manifested itself.  
A sense of detachment arose.

Translated by the author

Thera Nāgasamāla was able to stand up to it. He reflected upon the evil consequences that would come in its wake. He recoiled from it.

In a very similar situation, a monk by the name of Rājadatta sees the body of a dead woman cast away in a cemetery. Lustful thoughts seize his mind:

*Kāmarāgo pāturahū.* But he flees from there, and diligently mindful [*satimā sampajāno*], overpowers his thoughts as did the previous monk.

*Bhikkhu sīvathikaṃ gantvā addasaṃ itthiṃ ujjhiṭṭhaṃ  
apaviddhaṃ susānasmīṃ khajjantiṃ kimihi phuṭṭhaṃ.  
Yaṃ hi eke jigucchanti mataṃ disvāna pāpakaṃ  
kāmarāgo pāturahū andho'va savatī ahuṃ.  
Oraṃ odana-pākamhā tamhā thānā apakkamiṃ  
satimā sampajāno'haṃ ekamantaṃ upāvisiṃ.  
Tato me manasikāro yoniso upapajjatha*

*ādinavo pāturahū nibbidā samatittata.*

op. cit. vv. 315-319

Being a disciple of the Buddha, to the cemetery I did go  
and there beheld a corpse of a woman cast away.  
It was being eaten into by worms.  
While some feel a lamentable repugnance  
on seeing a dead body,  
lustful thoughts arose within me.  
I acted like unto a blinded man.  
In less time than is needed for cooking of rice  
I moved away from that place, and being  
mindful and diligent arrived at yet another place.  
Thereupon a correct attitude of mind dawned upon me.  
The evil that comes on its way manifested itself.  
A sense of detachment arose.

Translated by the author

The Pali words used in these contexts like *manasikāro*, *ādinavo*, *nibbidā*, *satimā* and *sampajāno* or their English equivalents like correct reflection, evil consequences, disgust, diligence and awareness are but a few. But they are essential pungent words. They do carry a tremendously powerful message with them. They are infallibly rewarding. The disciples who are aware of their monastic mission, that is in having renounced their household life in search of their Nirvanic goal, even from a perilous perch, finally achieve their goal successfully and are saved from ruinous disasters.

We meet in these texts of the Thera Gāthā another kind of disciple whose wellnurtured and well handled aesthetic sensitivity seem to open out wonderfully rewarding avenues of religious awakening. Here is Thera Sappaka whom one cannot afford to miss. He lives by the side of a river named Ajakaraṇī. The river

seems to give him delight: *Ajakaraṇī rameti maṃ*. This is by no means a concept from which a Buddhist needs to run away. `Beauty of things in themselves carry no evil. It is the way we think on them' [= *na te kāmā yāni citrāni loke sankappa-rāgo purisassa kāmo* at SN. I. 22].

The time is the advent of the rains. Hear how he delightfully sings and hear what he sings about.

*Yadā balākā sucipaṇḍaracchadā  
kālassa meghassa bhayena tajjitā  
palehiti ālayaṃ ālayesinī  
tadā nadī Ajakaraṇī rameti maṃ.  
Yadā balākā sucipaṇḍaracchadā  
kālassa meghassa bhayena tajjitā  
pariyesati lenaṃ alena-dassinī  
tadā nadī Ajakaraṇī rameti maṃ.*

op. cit. vv. 307-8

When the cranes clad in pure white plumes, scared on seeing the dark rain clouds gathering, are taking to flight in search of a place of shelter, [looking out for a shelter not within sight], then the river Ajakaraṇī gives me delight.

Translated by the author

This probably brings before us a swollen river overflowing its banks after the rains. These verses give us such a vivid picture. He says `This is not the time to leave the mountain streams behind and go': *nā'jja girinadīhi vippavāsa-samayo* [op. cit. v. 310.].

This same Sappaka Thera remarks and sings once again, on his own,

*Kan nu tattha na ramenti Jambuyo ubhato tahiṃ*



*sobhenti āpagā-kūlaṃ mama- [mahā?] lenassa pacchato.*

op. cit. v. 309

The Rose Apple trees behind my living cave  
lend beauty to both banks of the river.  
Whose hearts will they not delight?

Translated by the author

Not only does Thera Sappaka see beauty in nature but is capable of feeling with Nature, integrating harmoniously the interaction of man on the one hand, and on the other of bird and beast, and even the animate with the inanimate, one upon the other. The degree of his own enjoyment bursts forth when he, with the innocence of a child, asks 'Those beautiful Rose Apple trees which adorn the river bank on both sides, whom will they not delight = *kan nu tattha na ramenti?*' In the process, we have no doubt, he is himself equally soothed and comforted in body and mind. And there is inevitable enrichment of spiritual growth. That is how he comes to be inseparably wedded to the River Ajakaraṇī and is sad to leave her behind during rains.

Read what he says and join him to feel with him the way he feels about the world around him:

What is said of Thera Usabha at verse No. 110 is even more mystically enrapturing. He beholds a luxuriantly growing clump of trees on a rocky ledge.

*nagā nagaggesu susaṃvirūḥā udagga-meghena navena sittā  
viveka-kāmassa araṇṇa-saṇṇino janeti bhiyyo Usabhassa kalyataṃ,*

op. cit. v. 1110

These trees healthily perched on the top of a cliff, they indeed must be drenched by heavenly showers. In the heart of Usabha who is forest-conscious

and is a lover of solitude, they will generate immense joy.

Translated by the author

The above verses portray only what a camera lens would see. But the words *janeti bhiiyo Usabhassa kalyataṃ* hint at a great deal more. What Usabha has seen undoubtedly does capture his heart. He sees or he imagines the trees to be freshly drenched with water from heaven-fed clouds: *udagga-meghena navena sittā*. His vision is now framed within this perimeter. For he is said to be by nature forest-conscious: *arañña-saññī* and a lover of solitude: *viveka-kāma*. These two together are capable of conjuring up within him new dimensions of spiritual awakening.

Theras on the whole, in contrast to the theris, show far greater maturity in taking control over, and in re-acting to the totality of the world they live in, of humans, animals or plants. We have been able to indicate and highlight only a very limited area of this vast panorama.

## Therī- Gāthā

In marked contrast to the Thera-gāthā which portrays the tremendous spiritual heights which the male members of the Buddhist monastic community attained in their ardent pursuit of the austere life of *brahmacariya* laid down by the Master, the Therī-gāthā brings before us the untold miseries and hardships which the Indian women of the Buddha's day had to silently suffer on account of the age-old restrictions which the Indian religions and Indian society had imposed on them. They also had to face perilous risks in the hands of the pleasure-seeking males of the society, both rustic and elite.

An eminent Indian historian, Professor A.S.Altekar, describes the position to us as follows [C. Altekar, A.S., The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, p.204f]. 'The prohibition of *upanayana* amounted to spiritual disenfranchisement of women and produced a disastrous effect upon their general position in society.

It reduced them to the status of Śudras ... What, however, did infinite harm to women was the theory that they were ineligible for them [Vedic sacrifices] because they were of the status of the Śudras. Henceforward they began to be bracketed with Śudras and other backward classes in society. This we find to be the case even in the Bhagavadgītā IX.32.'

In the Manusmṛti we witness the cruel infliction of domestic subservience on woman. The road to heaven is barred to her and there is hard bargaining with her for the offer of an alternative route. Matrimony and obedience to the husband are the only means whereby a woman can hope to reach heaven. These strictures are viciously packeted within a single stanza in the following.

*Nāsti strīnām pṛthag yajño na vratam nāp'yupoṣatham  
patim śuśrūṣate yena tena svarge mahīyate.*

Manu. V. 153.

There are no individual sacrifices set apart for women. Nor are there any religious undertakings, nor observances of the fast. On account of their submission and their subservience alone to their husbands, they would be glorified in heaven.

Translated by the author

With this awareness of the socio-religious background of India in which the Buddha had to deliver his message of deliverance of man, one has necessarily to be impressed with the tremendous impact he has had on the liberation, not only of the entrenched and enslaved Indian woman, but of woman kind anywhere as a whole. We shall begin with the Buddhist nun, Bhikkhuni Somā who, having left her household life and joined the Buddhist monastic community was ardently applying for her spiritual edification and emancipation. The Therī-gāthā [Thig. vv. 60-62] tells us of the almost unassailable opposition Somā had to face from the

Indian thinking of the day in the words of the religiously conceived Sinful Satan or *pāpī Māra* who fired at her, almost at point blank range, dissuading her from her spiritual endeavours.

*Yaṃ taṃ isihi pattaḅbaṃ thānaṃ durabhisambhavaṃ  
na taṃ dvangula-paññāya sakkā pappotum itthiyā.*

Thig. v. 60

`What spiritual attainments for you stupid women  
who possess only your two-finger wisdom [*dvangula-paññā*]?  
These heights are the exclusive reserve of sages  
[*yaṃ taṃ isihi pattaḅbaṃ*].'

Translated by the author

Adequately schooled in the Buddhist tradition as Somā was, she thundered back at him with the following words, driving him fleeing through the woods.

*Itthi-bhāvo no kiṃ kayirā  
cittamhi susamāhite  
ñāṇamhi vattamānamhi  
sammā dhammaṃ vipassato.*

op. cit. v. 61

Our being men or women,  
what should it matter to you,  
when our minds are well set  
and our wisdom indeed is mature?  
Illumined by the light of the *dhamma*,  
we do correctly behold the truth.

Translated by the author

This, we wish to uphold as an excellent rebuttal of the global malaise of doubting the intellectual capacities of the female, whether in society or in religion. Could any thing more or any thing better be said in sponsoring a women's lib in any part of the world?

We must, without fail, include in this study of the Therī-gāthā even a very brief reference to the comfort, both social and spiritual, which the women of India were enabled to enjoy in the religio-cultural haven which the Buddha did carefully create for them, irrespective of caste and creed differences, through his meticulously organised Bhikkhuni *sāsana* or the full-fledged monastic community for women. The foregoing observations about Bhikkhuni Soma, brief though they are, should impress upon the reader the vastness of the sweeping changes which the benevolence of the Buddha brought upon humanity, both men and women, for their own edification in this very life, through their own attitudinal changes and also for the attainment in this very life in Nirvana of their final liberation beyond birth and death.

Flashing back to the perilous risks which the Indian women had to face in the hands of pleasure-seeking males of the society to which we have already referred, we now present to you a story from the Therī-gāthā which is both bewildering and flabbergasting. It tells us of a man who as a husband and a father stoops so low as to seek sexual gratification with both his wife and his own daughter. The tragic victim here turns out to be his own wife and the mother of his own daughter. She is none other than the fortunate lady who later comes to be embellished in the Sāsana as Therī Uppalavaṇṇā. She is far too great to crash under such lamentably disastrous social collisions.

We call here our Uppalavaṇṇā fortunate because, about fifty years ago, within our living memory, we encountered during the Jury sittings at a Supreme Court trial, a woman who had to face the same bitter pangs of agony of a mother-and-daughter sex abuse during a single night and ended up in the mother

murdering her daughter to relieve herself of the insult and the injury. The situation in both cases is identically same, excepting that one was within an elitist home and the other in a slum-dweller setting.

But the reaction pattern stands in marked contrast. What we wish to stress here is no more than the religio-cultural maturity of each individual and the difference of their reaction pattern. If humans can descend to such lower depths to seek sexual gratification through such scandalously ugly situations, Uppalavaṇṇā would have nothing but forthright condemnation, both demolishing and devastating.

*Ubho mātā ca dhītā ca mayaṃ āsum sapattiyo  
tassa me ahu saṃvego abbhuto lomahaṃsano.  
Dhir'atthu kāmā asuci duggandhā bahu-kaṇṭakā  
yattha mātā ca dhītā ca sabhariyā mayaṃ ahuṃ.*

op. cit. vv. 224-5

As mother and daughter, we both  
had to be co-wives of the same man.  
There arose in me utter revolt  
and degrading horripilation.  
Shame upon this sort of  
sexual gratification, I said.  
It is putrid and is perilously painful  
and is of offensive stench  
where I, the mother and my daughter  
are both abused by the same man.

Translated by the author

With these words of assessment and evaluation, her reaction was firm and decisive. She rejected the enjoyment of sensual pleasures of sexuality in the

household and entered the life of renunciation.

*kāmesv'ādīnavaṃ disvā nekhammaṃ dalha-khemato  
sā pabbajīṃ Rājagahe agāasmā anagāriyaṃ.*

op. cit. v. 226

Seeing the evil consequences of lustful sexual gratification, and seeing the firm security in the life of renunciation, from home to homelessness I went forth, in the city of Rajagrha,

Translated by the author

And her spiritual ascent came forthwith there from, in the wake of her renunciation.

*Pubbe-nivāsaṃ jānāmi dibba-cakkhuṃ visodhitam  
ceto-paricca-ñāṇaṅca sota-dhātu visodhitā.  
Iddhīpi me sacchikatā patto me āsavakkhaya.  
Cha me abhiññā sacchikatā kataṃ buddhassa sāsanaṃ.*

op. cit. vv. 227-8

She gained vision into former lives, Her divine eye was cleansed. She could read thoughts of others. She achieved the power of divine hearing. She gained super-natural powers. And finally she reached the extinction of defilements. Six-fold higher knowledge was gained. Mission of the Buddha was done.

Translated by the author

The stature which women of the Indian community re-gained more than twenty-five centuries ago under the magnanimity and liberalism of the teachings of the Buddha can be highlighted through this portrait gallery of the Therī-gāthā. In Buddhism, the religious life spoken of was always closely integrated, the

mundane life at the worldly level always being looked upon as preparing the *samsāric* beings for the achievement of their transcendental aspiration of Nirvana.

Here is yet another brilliant one. Subhā, the young nun dwelling in the mango grove of Jīvaka [Subhā Jīvakambavanikā], provides a vibrant example of one who has firm conviction about the spiritual goal she has chosen. She brushes aside with ease, courage and wisdom, and with as much disdain, the tempting and flattering remarks of a seducer [*dhuttaka*] who endeavours to tear her back to lay life to enjoy wanton pleasures of the household with her which she diligently renounces.

*Daharā ca apāpikā c'asi kiṃ te pabbajā karissati.  
nikkhipa kāsāya-cīvaraṃ ehi ramāmase pupphite vane.*

op. cit. v. 370

Childish and innocent art thou. What good will this mendicancy do to you?  
Discarding your dyed robe, let us rejoice in this flower-decked grove.

Translated by the author

Prompt came the shattering reply from Subhā who knew what she was about.

*Apathena payātum icchasi  
candaṃ kīḷanakaṃ gavesasi  
Meruṃ lañghetuṃ icchasi  
yo tvaṃ Buddha-sutaṃ maggayasi.*

op. cit. v. 384

You wish to journey on a path  
which is not yours to tread.



You wish to grab the moon  
 for a toy for you to play with.  
 You wish to leap over Mt. Meru.  
 In these, you wish to possess  
 a Buddha-child for yourself.

Translated by the author

The seducer confessed that it was the inescapable charm of the nun's eyes that bewitched him and drove him to this despicable crime of seducing such an angelic being.

*tava me nayanāni dakkhiya  
 bhiyyo kāma-rati pavaḍḍhati.*

op cit. vv. 381-2

On seeing the beauty of your eyes  
 the intensity of my lustful thoughts does increase.

Translated by the author

With no hesitation or reluctance whatsoever, she courageously pulls out one of her eyes and delivers it over to him. The veracity and the vibrancy of the Buddha word which was her religio-cultural stand, which Subhā gently and silently transmitted to the seducer triumphed, and the love-sick young man felt he was, in his crime, virtually wrapped up in flames [*aggim pajjalitaṃ'va lingiya*] or was gripping a deadly venomous snake [*gaṇhissaṃ āsivisaṃ viya*] and he apologises to the young nun whom he was offending. He was forgiven. And it was all's well that ends well. Freed from danger [*muttā*], she goes to the presence of the Buddha, with her eye restored [*cakkhu āsi yathā-purāṇakan'ti*].

One of the finest examples of a successful rejection of the highest possible achievements in mundane life, leading up to the final transcendental goal of

Nirvana is in the portrayal of the life of Therī Sumedhā [Thig. vv. 448-522]. Sumedhā was born as the daughter of the chief queen of King Koñca of Mantāvatī. She was virtuous and wise and socially accomplished on many counts. Perfectly disciplined as a Buddhist, she would approach her parents and tell them of the relative worthlessness of worldly pleasures they were offering her when compared with those of Nirvana in which she was keenly absorbed [*nibbānābhiratā*].

Sumedha's father had already agreed to give her in marriage to King Anikaratta and she was to be his chief queen. Young as she was, she was going to inherit command in the kingdom, be an heir to wealth and prestige.

The religious life of *brahmacariya* was going to to be painfully difficult, her father would indicate to her. Decide to enjoy the pleasures of the world, dear girl, he insisted.

*Agga-mahesī bhavissasi Anikarattassa rājino bhariyā.*

*Sīlāni brahmacariyaṃ pabbajjā dukkarā puttaka.*

*Rajje āṇā dhanam issariyam bhogā sukhā daharikā pi.*

*Bhuñjāhi kāma-bhoge. Vāreyyam hotu te putta.*

op. cit. vv. 463-4

As the wife of King Anikaratta,  
you shall be his chief queen.

O dear girl, Observance of *sīla*,  
and practice of higher religious life  
of *brahmacriya* as a mendicant  
is hard to be undertaken.

In the kingdom you shall have  
command over others and wealth,  
authority, possessions and comfort, O child.

Enjoy sensual pleasures of household life.

May marriage be yours.

Translated by the author

But she would relentlessly argue against her father's submissions, pointing out that it is the ignorance of the truths as taught by the Buddha which drive the majority of people to reconcile with *saṃsāric* continuance and choose to be born in the celestial worlds.

*saccāni amma buddha-vara-desitāni te bahutarā ajānantā  
ye abhinandantā bhava-gatam pihanti devesu upapattiṃ.*

op. cit. v. 454

The majority of people, O mother, not knowing the truths as taught by the master, rejoice in *saṃsāric* journeying. So they delight in being born in the heavenly realms.

Translated by the author

She would convincingly argue further, saying that birth in the heavenly worlds is by no means permanent, being caught up within the impermanent *saṃsāric* whirl. The foolish and the ignorant dread not at being born again and again.

*devesu'pi uppatti asassatā bhavagate aniccamhi.  
na ca santasanti bālā punappunaṃ jāyitabbassa.*

op. cit. v. 455

Birth even among *devas* is not permanent.

for they are within the rapidly changing *saṃsāris* whirl.

The fools fear not in being born again and again.

Translated by the author

No better sermon in praise of the Buddhist spirit of *nekkhamma* or renunciation, so convincingly argued, and such an honest acceptance of this chosen life [*sīlāni brahmacariyaṃ yāvajīvaṃ na dūseyyaṃ* op. cit. v. 459] as portrayed in these verses of Therī Sumedhā could have been found elsewhere. The Therī-gāthā is so replete with such courageous expressions of conviction by women, women who were eminent in their learning [*bhikkhunī ca bahussutā*]. Men shall always bend down their heads in respectful adoration and admiration before them for what they deserve.

Bhikkhu Dhammavihari at 86 ordained as a monk since 1990



## NIKĀYA [PAÑCA]

- five-fold classification of the Sutta collection in Pali Buddhist literature.

Perhaps the most authentic and the earliest reference to *nikāya* as a division of the early Buddhist texts of the Sutta collection or *dhamma* [as against the Vinaya] occurs in the Cullavagga account of the activities of the First Buddhist Council [*Paṭhama-saṅgīti* or *Pañcasatī saṅgīti* at Vin. II. 284 ff.]. This activity of the Council took place within a few months after the *parinibbāna* or passing away of the Buddha. It took another one hundred years for what is called the Second Buddhist Council. It is generally believed that perhaps these reports of the activities of these two Councils were compiled all together after the Second Council. Therefore we view this record about the First Council as possibly being at least a hundred years after the event. Nevertheless, it is old enough for our purpose. It is recognized by the Commentator Buddhaghosa as being canonical [*tantim ārūhā* DA. I. p. 2]. We view it with serious concern when students of

Buddhism, both of the philosophy and of the literature, speak of **four *nikāyas***.

The Cullavagga reports that the Elder Mahā Kassapa, having questioned Venerable Upāli at this council with regard to the texts of the ***Vinaya***, rehearsed the ***Ubhato Vinaya*** or the two Vinayas [*Eten ' eva upāyena ubhato vinaye pucchi.*] A different tradition, recently adopted even by the Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series of Sri Lanka, gives this as ***Ubhato Vibhaṅga*** [BJTS. 5 / 2. Cullavagga 2. p.550]. This change is apparently adopted to be in agreement with the Myanmar Chatṭha Saṅgāyanā tradition. [We disagree and side with the Thai tradition which upholds the ***Ubhato Vinaya*** reading. As far back as 1910, Bentara Saddhatissa edition of the Cullavagga published in Sri Lanka also adopted the ***Ubhato Vinaya*** reading.].

In like manner, the Elder Mahā Kassapa questioned Venerable Ānanda with regard to the major content of the Buddha's message of liberation, known up to that time by the word ***dhamma***. Elder Mahā Kassapa's major concern at that assembly of the First Council was to fix on the identity of the Buddha's teachings, namely of the ***Dhamma*** and the ***Vinaya***, only in a **two-fold division**, before they could suffer serious change in the hands of dissentients [*Handa mayaṃ āvuso dhammañ ca vinayañ ca saṅgāyeyyāma.*].

At this stage, Elder Mahā Kassapa is said to have started with the first sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, namely the Brahmajāla and continued through all the then known Buddha teachings known as ***dhamma***. The proceedings are totalled up as being ' **five different groupings** ' [*eten ' eva upāyena pañca nikāye pucchi.* Vin.II.p. 287].

This information preserved to us in the oldest known records of Canonical standing [*tantiṃ ārūlha.* i.e. in the Culavagga XI at Vin. II. 286 f.] leads us to the inference that at the time of reckoning of **the earliest literary output of Buddhist teachings**, the ***dhamma*** teachings were contained in **five specific divisions**. This is the genesis of the earlier concept of **five *nikāyas*** [as against the oft-

misunderstood **Four Nikāya** theory of much later origin] regarding the Sutta division of Buddhist teachings.

In spite of the emergence of new literary classifications like the **Tipiṭaka** or Three Baskets in the subsequent centuries of Buddhist history, this early classification of the totality of the **dhamma** teaching of the Buddha as **five nikāyas** seems to have survived almost up to the beginning of the Christian era. A very rich and meaningful verse in the **Milindapañha** which belongs to about this period says that when Elder Nāgasena arrived on the scene, there were monks who gathered around him who ' i. were **masters of the Tipiṭaka**, ii. **were versatile in the five nikāyas** as well as those iii. who had **mastered only the four nikāyas**. '

*Te ca tepiṭakā bhikkhū pañcanekāyikā pi ca  
catunekāyikā c ' eva Nāgasenaṃ purakkharuṃ.*

Milindapañha - Trenckner p. 22

How and why did this, the change from **five nikāyas** to **four nikāyas**, happen? What we are concerned here is about the splintering into two groups of the **masters of the older nikāya tradition**. From the unassailable evidence before us, we have to infer that the **five nikāya tradition is the older in our literary history** of Buddhism. The first four of these **nikāyas** have a bold and clear-cut division: **Dīgha** [long] and **Majjhima** [medium] length ones form one group on account of the length of their suttas and the **Samyutta** [kindred] and **Anguttara** [gradual] form another on account of the arrangement style of their contents. In this process, and historically in a very natural one, the fifth collection came to be called the **Khuddaka** which can mean the **miniature collection**, either 1. on account of **the smaller size of the total collection** or 2. **because of the smallness of most books in the collection**. A further influencing factor could have been **the questionable doctrinal worth of some of the books themselves**.

But this collection which for the greater part consists of metrical

compositions, has also **books of considerable doctrinal value** like the **Suttanipāta**, **Dhammapada** and **Theragāthā** and **Therīgāthā** which necessarily make them part and parcel of the early sutta tradition. Here one could even look out for yet another basis of discrimination like **being classical** or **popular in content**. Evidence of this stigmatization is seen in later times when this collection is even denied the right of being called a *nikāya* and instead has come to be called the **Khuddaka-gantho** [Miniature Book]. But inspite of this theoretical exclusion of the **Khuddaka** from the five-fold division of the Sutta collection [which apparently had taken place before the time of the Milindapañha], some of its more important books like the **Suttanipāta** would have continued to serve as part of the *dhamma* collection of the Sutta Piṭaka.

In his Aṭṭhakathā tradition, the Commentator Buddhaghosa firmly fixes this **four nikāya** theory for the Sutta Piṭaka when he says *Suttanta-piṭake catasso saṅgītiyo* [DA. I.14]. This, we have to firmly assert **is contrary to the report of the Cullavagga** to which we have referred earlier [*eten ' eva upāyena pañca nikāye pucchi*]. The **Cullavagga knows of no Abhidhamma recital at the First Council**. But Buddhaghosa is here compelled to accommodate the latterly evolved **Abhidhamma Piṭaka** at the *Dhamma-Vinaya* recital of the First Council.

So he reports of the recital of the first four *nikāyas* of the Sutta Piṭaka at the First Council and winds up the recital with the Anguttara Nikaya. Thereafter, **he himself reports that the seven books of the Abhidhamma were recited**, and jointly gone through by five hundred arahants and presented as the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. It is after **this ingenious insertion of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka in here** [unknown to the tradition of the Cullavagga] that Buddhaghosa introduces the acceptance of the [**stigmatized**] Khuddaka collection at the Recital. But he records here a serious disagreement.

The **Dīghabhāṇakas** are said to accept only twelve books in the Khuddaka collection and are said to maintain that this collection was deposited in the

Abhidhamma Piṭaka. This is definitely a firm resistance to give it a place in the Sutta collection. The **Majjhimabhāṅakas** are said to accept three more books, namely **Cariyāpiṭaka**, **Apadāna** and **Buddhavamsa** into the collection, making the total fifteen, and maintain that it was contained in the Suttanta Piṭaka. They both concede only the name **Khuddakagantha** to this collection [DA. I. 15].

The reason for this manipulation of the position of the Khuddaka Nikāya in the Suttanta collection, we feel cannot and does not need to be camouflaged. A new visitor to the scene in the person of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka had to be accommodated. See the ingenuity of the Commentator Buddhaghosa [or of the tradition he had inherited] in creating a new division of the entire teaching of the Buddha [*sabbam ' p ' idaṃ Buddhavacanam*] into five *nikāyas* [*nikāya-vasena pañcavidham*] DA. I.22].

This division admits, in the first instance, all the **Five Nikāyas** by their original names, including the **Khuddaka** as the last. The first four are left intact. In order to ingeniously find a place to accommodate [in the activities of the First Council] the late arrival, i.e. later than the First Council, of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, they go so far as to say that all Buddhist literature, barring the first Four Nikāyas [of the Sutta Piṭaka], i.e. the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma, are contained in the **Khuddaka** [*Sakalam Vinaya-piṭakam Abhidhamma-piṭakam Khuddakapāṭhādayo ca pubbe-nidassita-pañcadasa-bhedā thapetvā cattāro nikāye avasessam Buddha-vacanam*].

*īhapetvā caturo p ' ete nikāye dīgha-ādi ke  
tadaññaṃ Buddhavacanam nikāyo Khuddako mato ' ti.*

DA.I.23 VinA. I. 28

Two things emerge from the study we have attempted so far. 1. Like the Atharva-veda of the Indian Vedic tradition which, on account of its concern with the popular and vulgar activities like sorcery and witchcraft etc., has got pushed



out of the prestigious Vedic collection of the original **Four Vedas** [*Caturveda*], creating the new elite group of only **Three Vedas**. We feel, without any doubt, that in the same way the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, on account of its willingness to accommodate newer and unacceptable heterogeneous patterns of thinking as those in the **Apadāna**, came to be stigmatized for that very reason. This, we believe, is how the **Khuddaka** came also to lose its prestige as a *nikāya*.

2. Secondly, this enlargement or the increasing in size of the **Khuddaka** in the five-fold division of the **entire Buddhavacana** [not the specific Sutta Piṭaka] enables the inclusion of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka within the original Buddhist teachings. Without much sense and meaning, this division also pushes into this *nikāya* the entire Vinaya Piṭaka as well.

\* See the author's article **Buddhaghosa and the Tradition of the First Council**, written and published under his then lay name Jotiya Dhirasekera in the July-October 1957 - *UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON REVIEW* Vol. XV, Nos . 3 & 4



## NIBBĀNA

*Nibbāna* - There is no doubt that the Pali Buddhist term *Nibbāna*, as much as its Indian Sanskrit parallel **Nirvāna**, denotes in general the highest spiritual attainment in religious culture. For example, the union of the individual self or *pratyag-ātman* with the divine *paramātman* in the Bhagavadgītā [Section II. verse 72] would be referred to as *Brahma-nirvāṇam*. All these religious creeds hold this state to be an unsurpassed blissful one, beyond which there is none better. The Buddhists refer to this as *nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*, that **Nirvana is the highest bliss**. In it one discovers the desired peace and tranquillity. Buddhists speak of it as [*anuttaraṃ santivarapadaṃ. pariyesamāno* = searching for the unsurpassed state of peace]. The Bodhisatta himself refers to it so in the

Ariyapariyesana Sutta [MN. I. 163].

**nibbuta** - What each religious creed believed this to be seems problematic and open to diverse interpretations. Even within different schools of Buddhist thought, interpretations as to what **Nibbāna** is, are qualitatively different, one from the other. This is more so when one attempts to find etymological explanations for the word. Etymology apart, the word has come to denote **an ultimate state of peace and tranquillity**. That is why its past participial derivative form in **nibbuta** very broadly means tranquilized, peaceful and blissful. Note uses like *nibbutā nūna sā mātā ... yassā 'yaṃ īdiso* [= Tranquilized indeed is the mother ... whoever has such a ...] in the Nidānakathā of the Jātaka.

**nibbuti** - Coming back to Buddhist religious thinking itself, we feel that **Nibbāna** stands polarized to the concept of **Samsāra**. As **Samsāra** stands for the **ceaseless continuance** [*samdhāvati samsarati*] from birth to death and to birth and death again and again, **Nibbāna** is undoubtedly the **joyous termination of this painful process** which is referred to as **nibbuti** [*nir + vāti = nibbuti* = no more rolling on. It is derived from the root *vāti* / *vaṭṭati* = to roll on, turn]. In **Nibbāna**, this **Samsāric** process of rolling on ceases - *yattha vaṭṭaṃ na vaṭṭati* [SN. I. 15]. This, we believe is the primary and fundamental scope of **Nibbāna**.

Also note the statement with the parallel meaning in *nāparaṃ itthattāyā 'ti pajānāti* which is ascribed to every **arahant** on his attainment of this final goal. The Buddha himself is said to have claimed, on becoming the Buddha, that this is his last birth and that he is not going to be born again [*ayaṃ antimā jāti natthi 'dāni punabbhavo 'ti*]. We believe that this is what well and truly happens in **Nibbāna**. And that, while one still exists here and now in flesh and blood, as the Bodhisatta himself did at the age of thirty-five. What better fulfillment of an aspiration could there be for a Buddhist?

We would therefore find in the word **nibbuti** the **etymologically justified best expression** for this achievement in Nirvana. Not being born again is only possible

where the **wheel of life turns no more** [*yattha vaṭṭaṃ na vaṭṭati*]. We have this idea of *nibbuti* as the equivalent of *nibbāna* clearly expressed in *laddhā mudhā nibbutiṃ bhūñjamānā* at Sutta Nipata v. 228. Also at Udana p.75, where the Buddha, hinting to Venerable Sariputta about Lakunṭakabhaddiya's enlightenment, i.e. termination of his Samsaric continuance, uses this same phraseology. Note the beauty of the following usage.

*Acchijji vaṭṭaṃ byāgā nirāsaṃ. Visukkhā saritā na sandati.  
Chinnaṃ vaṭṭaṃ na vaṭṭati. Es ' ev ' anto dukkhassā ' ti.*

Such explanations as the above come from viewing life in Samsāra and release therefrom in Nirvāna as active dynamic processes propelled or ceased to propel by humans themselves.

[Note also here that the use of the word *nirvāṭi* in Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sutra's statement *Pratyātmikīṃ nirvāṭi kalpayāmah* is undoubtedly for this final release in Nirvana.].

*nibbanti* - The form *nibbāna* [i. e. the verbal noun meaning 'blowing away' or 'blowing off'] itself gives us yet another vibrant active aspect of this process of release. Qualitatively this seems very closely related to the former of the termination of the '**process of rolling on**' which is referred to as *vaṭṭati*. This latter word is *nibbanti* [*nir* + root *vā* / *vāti* = *nibbāti* = blows off, blows away]. See the very powerful expression at Suttanipāta verse 235 where it says that " These wise persons get blown off [away from Samsāra / into the tranquillity of Nirvana] like the lamp whose flame goes off [*nibbanti dhīrā yathā ' yaṃ padīpo*]." Here we would take the verb *nibbanti* as an **intransitive verb** which means that the '**lamp goes off or gets blown off.**'

Likewise in the Therīgāthā, we meet Therī Paṭācārā [not the mis-identified Therī Kisāgotamī. See Therīgāthā verses 219 to 223 for this correction] who tells us, without any ambiguity, that in the attainment of her enlightenment, her mind

was liberated [freed from *samsāra*-binding defilements] like the going off of the flame of the lamp [*padīpass ' eva nibbānaṃ vimkkho ahu cetaso*. Therīgāthā v. 116]. **A process that once existed has now ceased to be.**

In this concept of **getting blown off** too, we have a very clear picture of what happens in the process of moving out from Samsāra to Nirvāna. It is the very cessation of a seen and known process, resulting in a total removal of what once did exist. The negative result of this is declared to be very real by the Buddha himself in the Alagaddūpama Sutta where he says: " No gods or Brahmas will ever track the mind of a liberated disciple, saying **here lies perched his consciousness** " [*Evaṃ vimutta-cittaṃ kho bhikkhave bhikkhuṃ sa-Indā devā sa-Brahmakā sa-Pajāpatikā anvesaṃ nādhigacchanti idaṃ nissitaṃ tathāgatassa viññānaṃ ' ti*. MN. I. 140]. The reason for this is that the *nibbānic* being has, in this very life itself, gone beyond time-space realities [*Taṃ kissa hetu. Diṭṭhev ' āhaṃ dhamme tathāgataṃ ananuvejjo ' ti vadāmi*. loc.cit].

It is not possible for us not to make mention here to the very cryptic injunction of the Buddha to Bāhiya Dārucīriya which is recorded at Udāna p.8. where the **overriding of time-space concepts in Nirvana** appears to be clearly indicated. It is indeed an extremely subtle point of doctrine to grasp. But Bāhiya is seen grasping it with commendable wisdom. See what the Buddha himself says about Bāhiya ' s achievement. *Paṇḍito Bhikkhave Bāhiyo Darucīriyo paccapādi dhammassā ' nudhammaṃ. Na ca maṃ dhammādhikaraṇaṃ viheseti. Parinibbuto bhikkhave Bāhiyo Dārucīriyo ' ti*. This is what it means: As a wise person indeed did Bāhiya get at the essence of the *dhamma*. On account of *dhamma* deliberations, he did not make me weary. Bāhiya Darucīriya has died as **a fully enlightened person.**

Explaining further the religio-philosophical [or metaphysical, if you like] import of this situation, the Buddha himself tells Bāhiya that on "**reaching the Nibbanic state**" [i.e. when one does not push cognitive or perceptive processes like seeing

(*diṭṭhe*), hearing (*sute*), feeling (*muta*) and apprehending (*viññāta*) **to be anything more than the very process itself**, then one **ceases to think in terms of here, there or anywhere**. This makes end of suffering.

Try to get as much out of the original in Pali. Yato kho te Bāhiya diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ sute sutamattaṃ mute mutamattaṃ viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissati tato tvaṃ Bāhiya na tattha yato tvaṃ Bāhiya na tattha tato tvaṃ Bāhiya n ' eva idha na huraṃ na ubhayantarena. Es ' ev ' anto dukkhassā ' ti [Udāna p. 8].

**Taṇhakkhaya** - Conceptual alignments with **Nibbāna**, detected and discovered in Buddhist texts, possibly over the centuries, have led to the presentation of several more explanations and interpretations as to what **nibbāna** is. In a creed which emphasizes that Samsāra is the very natural outcome of the activity of craving or **taṇhā** [*Anamataggā ' yaṃ bhikkhave samsāro avijjā-nīvaraṇānaṃ sttānaṃ taṇhā-samyojanānaṃ sandhāvataṃ samsarataṃ*. SN. II.178], it is natural to look upon Nirvana as 'where **taṇhā** ends', i.e.

**taṇhakkahaya**. Urging the Aryan disciple to aim at termination of **taṇhā** as his spiritual goal, the Buddha admonishes Āyasmā Upasīva in the following words: **Taṇhakkhayaṃ nattamahābhipassa** = Day and night look up to the termination of craving as your ideal [Sn. v. 1070].

Apparently sensing this affinity between **taṇhā** and **nibbāna**, the Buddhists also strive to work out an etymologically acceptable explanation of **nibbāna** in relation to **taṇhā**. They take a form **vāna** to mean craving or **taṇhā** and propose an explanation as **nī** [or **nī**] = not, away from + **vāna** = craving. The Commentary to the Itivuttaka reference quoted below says: **Vānaṃ vuccati taṇhā. Nikkhantaṃ vānato natthi vā ettha vānaṃ imasmim vā adhigate vānassa abhāvo ' ti nibbānaṃ**. In other words, Nirvana is where **one has moved away from craving or where craving does not exist any more**. Paramatthadīpanī elaborates it further as [... **vāna-saṅkhātāya taṇhāya ' ti. Nikkhantattā nissatattā**. Paramatthadīpanī].

To us, this explanation is no more correct or incorrect than the attempted etymological explanation of the word *bhikkhu* as *saṃsāre bhayaṃ ikkhatī ' ti bhikkhu* [= He who sees fear or danger in Samsāric existence is a *bhikkhu*]. It certainly does mean a great deal. We certainly know of the existence of the word *vana*, together with *vanatha*, both meaning **desire, craving** as in the uses *Nikkāmo nibbano nātho* [Sn. verse 1131], *Nibbanā hotha bhikkhavo* [Dhp. v. 283] and *samsaggā vanatho jāto* [Iti. p. 70]. We discover the most impressive and most convincing uses of the word *vanatha* in the sense of craving or sensory attachment in the following verse in the Vangīsa Thera collection:

*aratim ratim ca pahāya sabbaso gehasitañ ca vitakkaṃ  
vanathaṃ na kareyya kuhiñ ci nibbanathā avanatho sa hi bhikkhu*

[Thag. v. 1214]

*Nibbāna-dhātu* - In passing, it seems also necessary to refer here to the existence in some Buddhist texts of a concept of *nibbāna-dhātu*. It is said that there are two categories or elements which are referred to as *dhātu* into which *nibbāna* could be divided. In a style, which in our opinion is not very characteristic of early Buddhist thinking, the attempt at dividing, classifying and categorizing religious and philosophic concepts seems to reach here even up to *nibbāna*. The Itivuttaka [p. 38 f.] speaks of two distinct categories of *nibbāna* as *sa-upādisesa* and *anupādisesa* [*Dve' mā bhikkhave nibbānadhātuyo. Katamā dve. Saupādisesā ca nibbānadhātu anupādisesā ca nibbānadhātu.*]. Here one notices two bases of division of *nibbāna*. The section in prose deals with a **qualitative difference** in the two categories.

i. The **nibbānic** individual, i.e. the **arahant** [arahaṃ hoti khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parikkhiṇa-bhavaasaññojao sammadaññā vimutto] is said to possess **his five sense organs intact** or **undamaged** [avighātattā] and therefore to **experience** [paccanubhoti] **all sensations, pleasant and unpleasant** [manāpāmanāpaṃ paccanubhoti sukhadukkhaṃ paṭisaṃvedeti] and **become aware of pleasure and pain**. His

elimination of **rāga dosa moha**, [i. e. on becoming an arahant], and for this reason apparently of experiencing sensations, is said to be at the level of **sa + upādisesa-nibbāna-dhātu**.

\* But we fail to see here how the **left-over-faculty of sensory experience** [pleasant and unpleasant] in the arahant could be labelled as **sa + upādi + sesa**. If the word **-upādi-** here is derived from the word **upādāna** [**upa + ā + root dā / dadāti**] which means - to grasp [i. e. grasping at life, leading to continuance in Samsāra] we maintain that it cannot be said of a **nibbānic** individual, because **upādāna** which must invariably lead to another existence [**upādāna paccayā bhavo**] is already eliminated at the level of becoming an arahant.

The use of this derivative word **upādi** from its original **upādāna** in the **Paṭiccasamuppāda** [as in **upādāna-paccayā bhavo**] is vitally important here. We insist that in any context, **upādāna** must imply the connection between two life phases in **bhava**. By no stretch of imagination can we accept the Itivuttaka Commentarial explanation that **upādi** here means the five aggregates or **khandhapañcakam** of this life which has been derived as a result through craving - **Tattha taṅhādīhi phalabhāvena upādiyati ti upādi. Khandhapañcakam.**].

ii. The Itivuttaka introduces the second category of **anupādisesā nibbānadhātu** as follows.

When the arahant, described exactly as above, **does not delight in any sensory experience in this very life** [**sabba-vedayitāni anabhinanditāni**], they are said to cool off or cease to exist [**sīti bhavissantī**]. Such a bhikkhu is said to be in the state of **anupādisesā nibbāna-dhātu**.

\*\* Unmistakably this classification **assumes two stages**, a first and second as it were [**as against two different types**], in the life of the same arahant, packed within one life time. The two are clearly progressive, the second implying a higher and more serene state than the first. The second one necessarily implies an

upgrading over the first, for he has to get beyond his left over *upādi + sesa*.

\*\*\* If they imply two different types, they necessarily indicate two different grades of arahants, at two different points of time, an earlier lower grade and a later higher one.

On the other hand, the accompanying **metrical portion of the Itivuttaka** which is closely associated with the prose gives a completely different picture. We are inclined to believe that the metrical version is the earlier and more authentic. While the classification of the prose section had essentially a **qualitative differentiation**, the metrical note stresses only a **temporal one, one of time phase** only: of an earlier stage in life [while living] and a later one, after the death of the same arahant.. This gives us a feeling that the Buddhists are apparently trying here, and we believe for no valid reason, to offer a parallel to the Indian **twin concept of release** of *jīvan mukta* [in this very life] and *videha mukta* [in the next life, of the self same person, after separation from his physical body at death, and on union with *paramātman*].

This is what the metrical portion of the text [PTS. p. 38-9]says:

### ***Saupādisesa***

One state bears fruit **here and now** [*Ekā hi dhātu idha diṭṭhadhammikā*] With *upādi* left over but the lead to existence terminated [*saupādisesā bhavanettisaṅkhayā*]

### ***Anupādisesa***

*Anupādisesa* is of the life beyond [*Anupādisesā pana samparāyikā*]

Wherein all existences totally cease to be [*Yamhi nirujjhanti bhavāni sabbaso.*]

\*\* But the tradition of early Buddhist suttas like the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta [MN. I. 63] and Kīṭāgiri Sutta [MN. I. 481] of the Majjhima Nikaya forbids us from



accommodating this kind of what 'we believe to be unwarranted divisions and classifications within the straightforward teachings of early Buddhism.' Both these suttas, while speaking of gradations on the spiritual ascent, tell us only of two possibilities, namely **the highest** and **the very next**, i.e. full enlightenment (*aññā*) in this very life and escape from Samsāra, or one more birth to be gone through (*anāgāmitā*), there being left-over *upādisese* [... *dvinnam phalānam aññataram phalam pāṭikaṅkham: diṭṭhe ' va dhamme aññā || sati vā upādisese anāgāmitā*. Both quotations are in the Majjhima Nikaya, at the places referred to above.]. These references also occur in many places in the Anguttara Nikaya.

In both these instances, we are convincingly told that any residual *karmic* force, categorically referred to as *upādi* [found within one = *sati vā upādisese*], prevents release from Samsāra. How then can there be any *nibbānadhātu* with *upādi + sesa*?

We have one more reference related to this subject from the Suttanipāta on which we like to comment here [Sn. pp. 59-62. vv. 343-358]

On the death of his teacher Nigrodhakappa, Venerable Vaṅgīsa was in doubt whether his teacher, at the time of his death, had reached his Nirvana or not. The word used by him for this is *parinibbuto* [*parinibbuto nu kho me upajjhāyo udāhu no parinibbuto ' ti*. Sn. p. 59]. We are certain that the word *parinibbuto* is generally used to refer to the physical death of a person who has attained full enlightenment or *aññā*, i.e. Nirvana. At DN. III. 55 the word *parinibbuto* is however used even with reference to the living Buddha [*Parinibbuto so bhagvā parinibbānāya dhammam deseti* - Udumbarikasīhanāda Sutta].

Later on in the metrical portion of this sutta, Vaṅgīsa is seen putting this same question to the Buddha somewhat differently. He wishes to know whether " **pursuing his life of brahmacariya, his teacher reached Nirvana or whether he is left with residual upādi.**" [*Yadatthiyam brahmacariyam acāri Kappāyano kacci ' ssa taṃ amogham. Nibbāyi so ādu saupādiseso. Yathā vimutto ahu taṃ suṇoma.*

Sn. v. 354]

Here we are immediately reminded of the statement of the Majjhima Nikaya quoted earlier *Dīṭṭhe 'va dhamme aññā sati vā upādisese anāgāmitā*. We feel the real question here is whether "one is fully liberated in this life or has to be born again."

The Buddha's reply to Vaṅgīsa makes us feel that the Buddha also understood it the same way. The Buddha's reply is: "Here and now he has completely cut off his greed for this self, the stream of evil which has been flowing for long. He has **completely crossed over birth and death.**" [*Acchecchi taṇhaṃ idha nāmarūpe - iti Bhagavā - Kaṇhassa sotaṃ dīgharattānusayitaṃ. Atāri jātimaraṇaṃ asesam*. Sn. v. 355]. This answer of the Buddha, we must confess, has for us a more specific early Sutta tradition ring for *upādisesa*.

Whatever or wherever be its origin, this theme of *Saupādisesa* and *Anupādisesa* is latterly seen to be popularly dwelt upon and elaborated in several places in the Anguttara Nikaya.

1. The Buddha is supposed to have passed away through *anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā - Idha tathāgato anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā parinibbuto 'ti*. AN. II. 3240

\* Are we prepared to say here that the Buddha, at the age of thirty-five, attained only the

***saupādisesa-nibbāna-dhātu?***

2. Divinities reporting to the Buddha that some Bhikkhuniyo reached their liberation as *Etā bhante bhikkhuniyo anupādisesā suvimuttā 'ti*. AN. IV. 1604

\* Are we to take this as a report of their physical death?

Qualitative attributes of Nibbāna.

***Taṇhakkaya***

Let us conclude with a brief study of some of the qualitative attributes of **Nibbāna**. There is no gainsaying the fact that *taṇhā* perhaps looms largest in a study of Buddhism. It is logically so. The Buddha's primary message to the world was the presence of *dukkha* in the world and its elimination. He repeatedly said this in this manner. *Pubbe c' āhaṃ bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhañ c ' eva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ* [MN. I. 140]. The promulgation of the Four Noble Truths which primarily centers on this first assertion of the Buddha about *dukkha* and *nirodha* brings out in its further analysis *taṇhā* as the cause or *samudaya* of *dukkha*. Therefore, we believe *taṇhakkhaya* has to come as the most fitting epithet of **Nibbāna**.

We have already quoted the Suttanipata reference which calls upon the disciple to look upon the termination of *taṇhā* as his spiritual goal [*taṇhakkhayaṃ nattamahābhipassa* Sn. v. 1070]. The Buddha's reply to Vaṅgīsa quoted above also offered termination of *taṇhā* as the highest Nirvanic attainment [*acchecchi taṇhaṃ idha nāmarūpe*]. The Buddha gives Pingiya the same advice at Sn. v. 1123 - *Jahassu taṇhaṃ apunabbhavāya*. Elimination of *taṇhā* therefore leads to the reduction of Samsāra-building activity or *kamma-kkhaya* and that leads to the termination of *dukkha* or *dukkhakkhaya*.

This thesis is worked out beautifully by the Buddha himself in great detail at Samyutta Nikaya V. 86 -7 where he says that it is through the Seven Factors of Enlightenment: *Katamo ca bhikkhave maggo katamā ca paṭipadā taṇhakkhayaṃ samvattati yadidaṃ satta bojjhaṅgā*.

He further elaborates it and says that each of these items has to be developed through the phases of *viveka* [disconnection], *virāga* [detachment] and *nirodha* [complete cessation]. The process must also fructify in complete abandonment [*vossaggaparināmiṃ*].

### ***Nirūpadhi***

In marked contrast to *taṇhā* [or craving] which as a **very active agency** keeps

beings tied to the process of Samsāric continuance [*taṇhā-samyojanānam*], we have *upadhi* which is viewed as a personal, an **already-collected substratum** in Samsara, an underlying deposit. It is formed with the prefix *upa* + root *dhā / dadhāti* = places, deposits], i.e. a product of craving [*taṇhā*], or grasping at [*upādāna*] and accumulating. This is viewed as the submerged foundation for Samsaric build-up. Its presence guarantees Samsaric continuance. Its complete elimination or *upadhi-saṅkhaya* alone assures us of the availability of Nirvana. In Nirvana, one is completely freed of *upadhi* and Nirvana is therefore referred to as *nirūpadhi*.

Note the words of the Itivuttaka as to what *nirūpadhi* is and how one gets to that state.

In whomsoever the defilements which **foster Samsaric continuance** are exhausted

Such a one is totally freed without any substratum left behind [*nirūpadhi*].

He is presently in his last physical form [*dhāreti antimaṃ dehaṃ*]

Having crushed the entire host of Mara, the Evil One.

*Bhavāsavo parikkhīṇo vippamutto nirūpadhi*

*Dhāreti antimaṃ dehaṃ jetvā māraṃ savāhiniṃ.* Iti. p.50



## NIBBIDĀ

A word which ranks high in the religio-ethical system of Buddhist thinking, as invariably leading a disciple to liberation in Nirvana. Literally it means ' **not obtaining delight in [sensory gratification]** '. It is best etymologically derived from prefix *nir* = not + root *vid / vindati* = obtains, finds [i.e. sensory delight, satisfaction or gratification]. Basically *nibbindati* must mean ' **not finding delight or satisfaction in** '. Therefore it seems also to have the extended meaning of ' **dissatisfied with,**

**disgusted of** ' [carrying within it the further impregnated meaning of ' **not finding it adequate or meaningful** ' as in the phrase *taṃ dhammaṃ analaṅkaritvā tasmā dhammā nibbija pakkāmiṃ* at MN. I. 165. where the Buddha-aspirant expresses his dissatisfaction with the teachings of his teachers Āṭāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta because they did not take him out - *anissaṭa* - of Samsāric cyclical continuance].

Following our earlier observation about the word's religio-ethical significance, let us reproduce here its cognate use with two other supporting words *virāga* [= detachment] and *vimutti* [= release] which closely follow it. Note the following quote from the Samyutta Nikaya [SN. II. 94] which speaks of an uninitiated ordinary worldling who is untutored in the *dhamma* [*assutavā puthujjano*] who would go through these three psychologically valuable stages or gradations of mind-reaction towards his physical body which is made up of the four great elements [*Assutavā bhikkhave puthujjano imasmim cātummahābhūtikasmim kāyasmim nibbindeyya ' pi virajjeyya ' pi vimucceyya ' pi. loc. cit.*].

The reason for this is given as ' that a person sees both the **build up** and the **disintegration** [*ācaya* and *apacaya*] of this four-element physical body as well as **its acceptance** and **its laying aside** [*ādāna* and *paṭinikkhepana*]. This merely physical external observation associated with the body is considered adequate for the above reactions of *nibbidā* [dissatisfaction], *virāga* [detachment] and *vimutti* [liberation] in a person.

But with penetrating philosophical subtlety this text further points out that an untutored worldling would still look upon this four-element body **as his self** [*attato upagaccheyya*]. He would not look upon so about his mind. The reason for this being that the body would still be seen as continuing to exist even a hundred years or more. But what is called *citta* [thought], *mano* [mind] and *viññāna* [consciousness] is something that comes, both by day and by night, into being as one thing and ceases to be as yet another thing [i.e. with no apparent persistent

continuity.]

Thus a wise man should reflect well on the causal genesis alone, namely that dependent on one thing another arises and upon the cessation of the former, the latter ceases to be. Namely that the life-generating stuff [as process or product] called *saṅkhāra* is brought about through *avijjā*, i.e. lack or absence of correct vision. Thus with this methodological approach begins the correct analysis of the human life process referred to as the Chain of Causal Genesis or *Paṭiccasamuppāda* which extends infinitely through Samsāra.

This particular Samyutta Nikaya text we have presented here sums up beautifully its teaching, saying that this kind of approach and the consequent vision [*evaṃ passamī*] leads a wise disciple to take a detached view with regard to one's five-aggregate-body [*pañcakkhandha*]. This detachment or *nibbidā* leads to a total under-valuing or non-clinging [*virāga*] and that in turn to a complete liberation [*vimutti*] from one's leaning on to a notion of oneself. Here is the text:

*Evaṃ passamī bhikkhave sutavā ariyasāvako rūpasmim ' pi nibbindati vedanāya ' pi nibbindati saññāya ' pi nibbindati saṅkhāresu ' pi nibbindati viññāṇasmim ' pi nibbindati. Nibbindam virajjati. Virāgā vimuccati vimuttasmim vimuttamiti ñāṇam hoti. Khīṇā jāti vusitam brahmacariyam kataṃ karaṇīyam nāparam itthattāyā ' ti pajānāti. Ibid.*

One notices in this context that *nibbidā* [*nibbindati*] or **detachment from sensory gratification** is invariably the gateway to final release in Nirvana. That is why the constant injunction by the Buddha to his disciples to earnestly develop this attitude of detachment [*nibbidā-bahulo bhava*. Thag. vv. 1223-5 and Sn. v. 340].

It is well worth taking a closer look at the above two contexts. Let us first glance at the verses of Thera Vaṅgīsa in the Theragāthā [Thag. vv. 1223-5]. The first verse No. 1223 really introduces us to the situation which necessitates the

talk about *nibbidā*, i.e. restraint in or moving away from *kāma*. Thera Vaṅḡisa refers to *kāma* within himself as a consuming fire [*kāmarāgena ḡayhāmi cittaṃ me pariḡayhati*] and requests for its being put [*sādhū nibbāpanaṃ brūhi*].

What a wonderful admonition follows this. In reply to this, it is said: " It is the **perverse nature of your sense reactions** that makes you burn within " [*saññāya vipariyesā cittaṃ te pariḡathati*]. It is further said: " Avoid taking things of the world as wholesome and lustfully gratifying " [*nimittaṃ parivajjehi subhaṃ rāgūpasamhitam*]. The final summing up is as follows: " With a **totally unified mind**, learn to focus attention on the **unwholesome reality of the world**. May you have an awareness of your own physical being. **Be thou constantly detached** " [*asubhāya cittaṃ bhāvehi ekaggaṃ susamāhitam sati kāyagatā ty ' atthu nibbidā-bahulo bhava*].

We are not unaware that the Theragāthā Commentary endeavours to place this apparent dialogue as being between Thera Vaṅḡisa and his senior brother in the Sāsana, Thera Ānanda. But the depth of wisdom about the problem shown here and the penetrative analysis of it undertaken make us associate the whole episode with the Buddha himself. A similar admonition made by the Buddha to Venerable Rāhula in the Suttanipāta [Sn. ⅴ. 335-342] impresses us with an unmistakable closeness of analysis and instruction given to Vaṅḡisa and Rāhula therefore leads us to believe that it is more appropriate in the hands of the Buddha.

Now let us go over to the Buddha, admonishing his son Rahula [Sn. ⅴ. 335-342]. He gives his young son a very comprehensive code for good living, leading up to Nirvana. The inspiration and guidance is derived both from **the Suttas** and **the Vinaya**. Primarily *pabbajjā* and the termination of Samsāric ills [*dukkhassantakaro*] are shown to be closely coupled. The Buddha is seen telling him that since he has left the household life and pleasures therein with conviction, he should endeavour to make an end of suffering.

*Pañcakāmaguṇe hitvā piyarūpe manorame  
saddhāya gharā nikkhamma dukkhassantakaro bhava, Sn. v. 337*

Then the Buddha indicates to him all injunctions relating to monastic propriety like moderation in eating [*mattaññū hohi bhojane*], and limited desire for food, clothing, shelter and medicaments. Even the **restraint with regard to the Pātimokkha is specifically indicated** [*samvuto pātimokkhasmiṃ*]. In addition to these which are, more or less, semi-legal Vinaya considerations, we get once again the more authentic and traditional psycho-ethical injunctions about attitudinal changes to the world one lives in which are derived from the suttas. There is considerable identity here between the verses of Theras Vaṅgīsa and Rāhula. To Rāhula also, the Buddha delivers his basic injunction *nibbidābahulo bhava* = Be thou constantly detached from sensual pleasures [Sn. v. 340].

Note here the identities in the two sets of verses:

Vaṅgīsa: [Theragāthā]

*nimittaṃ parivajjehi subhaṃ rāgūpasamhitaṃ v. 1224*

*asubhāya cittaṃ bhāvehi ekaggaṃ susamāhitaṃ  
sati kāyagatā ty ' atthu nibbidā bahulo bhava. 1225*

*animittañ ca bhāvehi mānānusaṃ ujjaha  
tato mānābhisamayā upasanto carissasi. 1226*

Rāhula: [Suttanipāta] *nimittaṃ parivajjehi subhaṃ rāgūpasamhitaṃ v. 341*

*asubhāya cittaṃ bhāvehi ekaggaṃ susamāhitaṃ  
sati kāyagatā ty ' atthu nibbidā bahulo bhava. 340*

*animittañ ca bhāvehi mānānusaṃ ujjaha*



*tato mānābhisamayā upasanto carissasi. 342*

To whom shall we ascribe the authorship of these instructions, to the Buddha or to Ānanda or to both?

One should not fail here to observe the nearness of the term *nibbidā* to *nekkhamma-saṅkappa* which is the first of the three separate items of *saṅkappa* under *Sammā-saṅkappa*. And we insist that *Sammā-saṅkappa* is the **second successive item** on the Noble Eight fold Path to which one steps in after gaining an insight or *samm -ditṭhi* into the Buddhist way of thinking [*āgato imaṃ saddham*]. In the Noble Eight-fold Path too, *nekkhamma-saṅkappa* is no more and no less than moving away from *kāma-saṅkappa* or proneness to sensory gratification.

Thus invariably, *nibbidā* in Buddhist religious culture is no more and no less than delay, reduction and finally moving away from gratification of sensory delights of the world or *kāma* with which humans are constantly seduced and enticed.



## NISSAGGIYA - PĀCITTIYA

**A Buddhist Ecclesiastical Offence [Āpatti] involving forfeiture.**

This comes under the very broad category of offences called the **Pācittiya**. Training [*sikkhā*], culture and growth [*bhāvanā*] and discipline [*vinaya*] are key words in Buddhist religious life which operate in the two major areas of i. the lay community [*gihī*] at large and ii. the selected community of those men and women [*pabbajitā*] who have taken to a life of renunciation [through self-choice]. As a term of very wide coverage, the word *sikkhā* is used to contain the entire

gamut of development in Buddhism as a religion. The concept of *sikkhā* as training is carefully graded into **three ascending stages** of 1. *sīla*, 2. *samādhi* and 3. *paññā* which are collectively referred to as *tisso sikkhā*.

This training begins, for every Buddhist, whether monk or layman, with grounding in morality. It is primarily the regulation of conduct or behavioural pattern of life of all humans in society, including men, women and children. This preliminary stage is referred to as *sīla-sikkhā*. It basically concerns itself with inter-personal relationships within the family, society or community, and finally with the state and the nation. Inter-state and international relations and harmony is not lost sight of.

The basis for this goodness in life for humans is **self-example** or *attūpanāyika*, i.e. behaving towards others in a way that one would like others to behave towards one. It has to grow out of an awareness of human nature, human needs and human feelings. It needs no external divine authority or command. This is the sole basis of the entire Buddhist concept of *mettā* [Skt. *maitrī*] or universal loving kindness, which is delivered direct from person to person, with no external intermediary agency.

With this primary concern, Buddhist morality begins with respect for life [stretching even as far as animal and plant], respect for the legitimately owned and possessed property of the other. Buddhists also show a very serious concern for the healthy and proper relationship between the sexes, both for sanity and normalcy here in this life, and also essentially as a basis for the upgrading of Buddhist spiritual life, with unmistakable transcendental aspirations.

We make these introductory remarks here with a view to stress the need for **sustained application** in the **progressive development** of **religious growth**, call it moral, intellectual or spiritual. Here one sees the emergence of the more seriously concerned persons taking to a full-time **life of renunciation** or *pabbajjā*. They leave behind their household life, along with its multiple activities. Literally

they are launched off on a specific spiritual journey. This is the beginning of Buddhist monasticism. The religious culture of those who embark on this journey was first achieved through the instructions, i.e. the *dhamma* of the Sutta Piṭaka. Then owing to the institutional expansion through time and space, there began to appear laxities in discipline. This brought about the necessity for the legalized machinery called the **Vinaya** for the maintenance of monastic discipline which brought in its wake both prosecution and punishment. The subject of *nissaggiya-pācittiya* which we take up now properly belongs to this area of legalized Buddhist monastic discipline.

The **Vinaya** introduces to us [at Vin. I. 103] five different kinds of monastic offences [*pañcannaṃ vā āpattikkhandhānaṃ*] which number at times also rises to seven [*sattannaṃ vā āpattikkhandhānaṃ*]. They directly result from the breach of the monastic regulations called *sikkhāpada* laid down in the **Pātimokkha**. They are **220** in number for the monks and **304** for the nuns, leaving aside in each case the seven *adhikakaraṇa-samatha-dhammā* which are common to both groups and are provided for the settling of community legal disputes.

These *sikkhāpada* are arranged in descending order of gravity, starting with 1. the four *Pārājikā* which are the most serious of all monastic offences, requiring the miscreants to be **forthwith expelled from the Order**. No remedial action whatsoever is possible with them [*pārājiko hoti asamvāso*]. 2. Next come the *Saṅghādisesā*, thirteen in number. These contain very specific individual offences against the spirit of monastic life. Some are also damaging to the prestige of the community. Punishment for these include, on the voluntary announcement of his or her offence by the offender to a member of the Saṅgha, public withdrawal for a specific period of six days [*chāratam mānattam*] of privileges normally enjoyed by a monk, such as being attended on by a junior. Associated with this penalty of **Mānatta** is another derivative punishment called **Parivāsa** which is imposed for the number of days the offence had been concealed. This precedes the regular **Mānatta** penalty. **Mānatta** follows on the

satisfactory and successful completion of the specified period of **Parivāsa** penalty.

Offences below these two categories do not, on the whole, carry specific punishments recommended for them. They are no doubt offences or transgressions against monastic propriety and the miscreants must admit their guilt and express their regret and remorse about them. Repetition of offences must be discreetly avoided [*āyati samvara*]. There is a very large group which goes under the name of *Pācittiya*. These are offenses over which one feels and expresses one's remorse and regret and seriously undertake not to repeat them.

This large category of *Pācittiya* is divided into two groups. The first called the *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* consists of 30 considerations [there being the same number for both monks and nuns] which reckon with unauthorized possession of monastic property like robes, bowls, rugs, carpets, coverlets etc. etc. These include what have **been obtained** by monks **in improper manner** from nuns or from lay persons, by directly specifying and ordering them. Or a monk **may exceed the legally authorized and allowable quantities of such items**. The punishment is that they have to be surrendered to the community [for the benefit of others who are in need]. This **voluntary forfeiture** which is legally required under monastic legislation, of what one has got into one's hand, is *Nissaggiyaṃ Pācittiyaṃ* [*Idaṃ me bhante cīvaram dasāhātikkantaṃ nissaggiyaṃ. Imāhaṃ āyasmantānaṃ nissajjāmi. Vin. III. 196 f.*]. The Sangha then accepts it in his name and re-allocates it to another who is in need of one [... *Idaṃ cīvaram itthannāmassa bhikkhuno nissaggiyaṃ. Āyasmantānaṃ nissatṭhaṃ. Yadi āyasmantānaṃ pattakallaṃ āyasmantā imaṃ cīvaram itthannāmassa bhikkhuno dadeyyun 'ti loc. cit.*].

At a time when the Buddhist Saṅgha were entirely dependent [*parapaṭibaddha*] on the gifts of food and clothing given by the pious lay community, it would have been necessary to eliminate or reduce to a minimum

the gap between the haves and have-nots in the Saṅgha community. Food and clothing had to be equitably shared for the peaceful continuance and survival of the community.



## NISSAYA

In the study of Buddhist monasticism, the word *nissaya* covers two important areas.

1. *nissayā* as in the **four nissayas** or *cattāro nissayā* refer to the four basic items of sustenance in the life of a Buddhist mendicant or *pabbajita*. They cover food, clothing, shelter and medicaments, referred to as *bhojana*, *cīvara*, *senāsana* and *gilāna-paccaya*

In the case of a Buddhist mendicant, these items are to be of a special sort. Simplicity has to be their hall-mark. In their acquisition, they should cause minimum inconvenience to the lay community who provide them to the monks in a spirit of sheer charity. A mendicant has to be of very light livelihood [*sallahuka-vutti*]. The *nissayā* should also encourage in the life of the mendicant a frugal, abstemious and unostentatious character.

- a. Food should be obtained through begging from door to door whatever is available to be offered as bits of food or *piṇḍa* [*piṇḍapāta* or *piṇḍiyālopa-bhojana*]. It is through this habit of begging for food that a Buddhist mendicant comes to be called a *bhikkhu* [*bhikkhafi' ti bhikkhu*].
- b. Clothing should consist of robes made of fragments of cloth collected at random, literally from garbage dumps or cemeteries where dead

bodies were thrown [therefore also covered with dust or *pamsukūla*]. When prepared for wear they were obviously called *kāsāyāni vatthāni*, multi-coloured fragments stitched together and dyed [*kasāva* or *kāsāya*] into a single colour. Mendicants' robes were **dyed robes**. Therefore they are *kāsāyāni vatthāni*. Also referred to as being *kāsāva*. [Note uses like *kesamassuṃ ohāretvā kāsāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā* [DN. I. 63] and *anikkasāvo kāsāvaṃ yo vatthaṃ paridahessati* [Dhp. v. 9].

It is a **gross error** to call a Buddhist monk as being ' **yellow robed** '.

**See also CĪVARA and PAMSUKŪLA.**

- c. Shelter shall normally be at the foot of trees [*rukka-mūla-senāsana*].
- d. Cattle urine, with items of medicinal value like gall-nuts seasoned in it, was normally considered adequate.

These were considered normal basics for the mendicant [... *nissāya pabbajjā*]. In special cases and under special circumstances, many more luxury-looking items were permitted under all four heads. The basics were the minimum with which a monk should be satisfied to carry on his mendicant life without any grumbling [*tattha te yāvajīvaṃ ussāho karaṇīyo*]. On obtaining higher ordination of *upasampadā*, a monk is to be immediately and invariably reminded by his preceptors of these four items which are referred to as *cattāro nissayā* or **Four Basics** [*upasampādentena cattāro nissaye ācikkhituṃ*. Vin. I.58].

- 2. In monastic community life, *nissāya* also refers to the **period of tutelage** under which a junior monk should live [*nissāya vatthabbaṃ*] under his teacher [*ācariya*] or his preceptor [*upajjhāya*] for a specified period of time - something like a period of monastic apprenticeship. This is meant to be a period of growth in monastic life, under real paternal care of *in loco parentis*

[*puttacittam upaṭṭhapetvā* / *pitucittam upaṭṭhapetvā* Vin. I. 45, 60]. This was originally fixed at ten years but latterly reduced to five years [Ibid. 60,62]. But a proviso was placed that an incompetent monk should live under this tutelage all his life [Ibid. 80]. Also under reasonable conditions, this tutelage could be justifiably terminated as in the case of death or departure of the teacher. It was not everybody's privilege in the monastic community to hold this position of tutor. Vinaya regulations required them to be qualified to hold these positions.

**Nissaya** or monastic apprenticeship in Buddhist Vinaya is not to be viewed as a junior monk being put under subordination for its own sake. The **Upajjhāya** and **Ācariya** under whom this is to be lived have to be competent teachers who are expected to educate the novitiates in these two specific areas of i. monastic training with regard to social relationships [*abhisamācārikā sikkhā*] and 2. monastic training in higher religious culture [*ādibrahmacariyikā sikkhā*]. Their academic life has also to be looked into [*abhidhamme vinetum abhivinaye vinetum*]. All these references occur at Vin. I. p. 64].

In Buddhist monastic history, we also get under **nissaya** an **act of ecclesiastical punishment** or **daṇḍakamma** which is referred to as **nissaya kamma**. In monastic law there are two kinds of punishments: 1. for breach of Patimokkha discipline and 2. for violation of non-Patimokkha monastic propriety which lies outside the legalized discipline.

**Nissaya kamma** which means, more or less, Act of **Subordination** [i.e. being put under the watchful care of] comes in the second category [See Vin. II. p.7f.]. The Buddha himself is said to have recommended it to be carried out on a monk by the name of Seyyasaka. The offensive traits of character which call for this punishment are listed as being foolish [*bālo*], not educated / learned [*avyatto*], full of monastic offenses [*āpattibahulo*], not blameless in character [*anapadāno*], and involved with lay persons in unacceptable and undesirable relationships.



## NEKKHAMMA

- A term of very great religio-ethical significance in Buddhism, both for monk and layman.

It can be explained as:

1. Regulation, reduction or rejection of sense gratification or *kāma*.  
Etymologically this meaning is derived from the combination **ni** [= not] + **kāma** [= sense delights]. We believe, this in itself, does not imply departure from household-life.
2. Renunciation of household pleasures or departure from the household and taking up to a life of homelessness. This is derived from the combination **nis** [away from] + root **kam / kamati** [= goes, departs, leaves behind].

We see from the above that both these meanings nearly point to the same. But the first has a special point of emphasis above the second in that its stress is **on one's attitude to sensory gratification, even while being in the household**, without serious departure therefrom. This polarized emphasis is seen in such Pali references as *kāmānam ādīnavaṃ okāraṃ samkilesaṃ nekkhamme ānisaṃsaṃ pakāsesi* [at DN. I. 110], as well as *kāmesu ādīnavaṃ disvā nekkhammaṃ daṭṭhu khemato* [at Sn. 424].

Note also the explanation of nekkhamma-samkappa in marked contrast to kāma-samkappa in the explanation of micchā-samkappa in the Mahācattāḷisaka Sutta [Katamo ca bhikkhave micchā-samkappo? Kāma-samkappo vyāpāda-samkappo vihimsā-samkappo. Ayaṃ bhikkhave micchā-samkappo.] at MN. III. 73. This value and validity of getting rid of **kāma** as one ascends the ladder of spiritual development in Buddhism is further witnessed in a study of the **jhānic**



process. The very first **jhāna** requires that one gets rid of **kāmā** [vivicceva kāmehi], together with sinful states of mind [vivicceva akusalehi dhammehi] for its successful completion [DN. I. 73].

Let us now clearly get the Buddhist idea of **kāma**. According to Buddhist teachings, not all beautiful things in the world [**citrāni**] are **kāma** or lustful in themselves [*Na te kāmā yāni citrāni loke*. SN. I.22]. It is the lustful attachment that brings about taint to them [*Sarikkappa-rāgo purisassa kāmo*. loc.cit.].

This is a vital point of ethical correction in Buddhism. At the very outset of being a Buddhist, one has to get a correct awareness of the Buddhist attitude to life. One gets this through an understanding as to the what the Buddhist **dhamma** is. This position is clearly indicated as **āgato imaṃ saddhammaṃ** [*Kittāvatā kho āvuso ariyasāvako sammādiṭṭhi hoti. Ujugatā ' ssa diṭṭhi dhamme aveccappasādena samannāgato āgato imaṃ saddhamman' ti*. MN. I. 46]. The Buddhist texts precisely call this **sammā diṭṭhi** [= correct or corrected vision]. There is no mistaking that this is also called the first item [*sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā* MN.III. 72] in the Eightfold Path to Nibbana.

When one knows his true identity as a Buddhist, he is invariably called upon to plan and structure his thinking in accordance with Buddhist aspirations. This invariably brings us to the **second successive stage** in the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Path, namely **Sammā samkappa** or **regulated thought structure**. The primary re-structuring of a Buddhist's thinking, once on the Path, aims at gradual moving way from one's gratification of senses. This really is **Nekkhamma-samkappa**. This alone makes sense in the Buddhist scheme of religious culture. This change of direction is closely supported by the other two items of **samkappa**, namely **avyāpāda** [non-hostility] and **avihimsā** [non-violence]. This is how one embarks on the the first stage of **sīla-sikkhā** or grounding in morality which is constituted by the three items of *sammā vāca sammā kammanto* and *sammā ājivo*.

The associated idea of ' total renunciation of household life ' or *pabbajjā*, coupled with *nekkhamma*, is not necessarily an illogical derivative. But it must be remembered that *nekkhamma* is not the exclusive prerogative of the monk [*pabbajita* or *bhikkhu*]. The Buddhist has to begin his religious life founded on this psycho-ethical basis. As the Muni Sutta of the Sutta Nipāta puts it, the difference between the *gihī* and the *bhikkhu* who is bent on his spiritual aspirations is only one of speed, as they both travel towards the same goal [*Sikhī yathā nīlagīvo vihaṅgamo hamsassa nopeti jvaṃ kudācanaṃ Evaṃ gihī nānukaroti bhikkhuno munino vivittassa vanamhi jhāyato*. Sn. 221].



## PAMSUKŪLA 1.

A word used in Pali Buddhist literature to refer to the **coarse robe material** [*pamsukūla-cīvara* / *paṃsukūlacīvaraṃ nissāya pabbajjā*] worn by the Buddhist mendicants, i.e. those who have taken to a monastic life. There are four main items of basic sustenance for them referred to as *nissayā*. They are 1. food obtained through begging or *piṇḍiyālopa-hojana*, 2. dust-heap robes or *pamsukūla-cīvara*, 3. shelter under the foot of trees or *rukhamūla-senāsana* and 4. cattle urine as medicaments or *pūtimutta-bhesajja*. See also **CĪVARA** and **NISSAYA**.

These are indicated as minimum basic needs which a mendicant may receive from the faithful lay devotees. He should strive to be satisfied with these and endeavour to live his religious life on these alone, even if he receives no more. But this is not made compulsory. A dissident disciple, Devadatta, wanted them to be made so. But the Buddha turned down this request. Under the name *nissayā*, these four are invariably made known to all Buddhist monks at the stage of their reaching senior status [*upasampadā*]. On the other hand, everyone of these items has more or less semi-luxury items appended to them which a monk

may receive as supplementary gifts [*atireka-lābho*] from generous lay devotees.

These bits of discarded material to be used for stitching together for making robes are to be generally picked up from cemeteries and garbage dumps. They would invariably be of diverse colours and varying quality and the resulting patched-robe was bound to be aesthetically not very acceptable in the eyes of the public. To avoid this harshness, it was decided to dye the robe in a single colour. After considerable trial and error, earth pigments and natural dyes obtained through boiling in water wood and bark were decided upon. It is this **process of dyeing** which fixed the name *kāsāya* for the robe of the Buddhist monk. The word *kāsāva* is also freely used for the same. Note Pali references like *kāsāyāni vatthāni ācchādetvā* [donning dyed robes] or *anikkasāvo kāsāvaṃ yo vattham paridahessati* [whosoever dons a dyed robe, himself not being free from spiritual blemishes]. The the robe of the Buddhist monk is never referred to as being **yellow** in colour.



## PAMSUKŪLA 2.

The word **PAMSUKṬLA** is also used today by the Buddhists [specially of Sri Lanka] to refer to **the religious ceremony associated with the disposal of their dead**, through burial or cremation. Before a dead body is disposed of, a solemn religious ritual is held either in the home or at the cemetery where Buddhist monks are offered a length of undyed white cotton cloth [symbolic of the *pamsukūla*] to be used for making their robes. This is referred to as *mataka-vattha* or garment material offered in memory of the dead. The merit acquired through this is transmitted to the credit of the dead, assuming that they are, even accidentally, in a state of want. Through association with the symbolic *pamsukūla* [robe material] that is offered, the entire funeral ritual has now come to be called *pamsukūla*.



## PAÑCA – SĪLA

### Five-fold Buddhist Lay Precepts

One would do well to begin a study of *Pañcasīla* in Buddhism by referring to verses 246-7 of the Dhammapada. They run as follows.

*Yo pāṇaṃ atipātetī musāvādañ ca bhāsati  
loke adinnaṃ ādiyati paradārañ ca gacchati  
surāmerayapānañ ca yo naro anuyuñjati  
idh ' ev ' eso lokasmiṃ mūlaṃ khaṇati attano.*

Whosoever in this world destroys life of living things, utters what is untrue, takes possession of what is not given, resorts to the company of others' spouses, and is addicted to drugs and intoxicating drinks, such a person digs up his own root in this world itself.

Translated by the author

From the literary point of view, we would venture to say, this listing of *pañcasīla* is both precise and comprehensive. This is how Buddhism seems to preserve it from very ancient times. We wish to make two preliminary observations at the very outset.

1. Many students of Buddhism, sometimes both of the higher and the less higher grades, question the validity of five items being in this listing, because the fifth item of *surāmerayapāna* is not discovered in the listing of *sīla* in suttas like the Sāmaññaphala of the Dīgha Nikāya [DN. I. 63 f.]. In spite of this absence, it is all too well known how Buddhism is very conscientiously critical of this social malaise of alcoholism and drug addiction. Evils of this [*surāmeraya-majja-*

*pamādaṭṭhānānuyoge ādinavā* are specially listed and studied in the Sigāla Sutta [DN. III. 182 f.]. With regard to *surāmerayapāna* in Buddhist monastic discipline, see Vinaya IV.108 f. where it relates the story of Sāgata thera and the circumstances leading to the promulgation of the relevant *sikkhāpada* as a *Pācittiya* rule [No. 51] on the subject [*surāmeraya-pāne pacittiyaṃ*]. More details below.

2. These verses from the Dhammapada also assure us, without any hesitation, the real significance of the third precept of *kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī*. We see absolutely no reason for writers on **Buddhist Ethics** to see in this precept an allusion to vague and unspecified **gratification of sense pleasures**. To do so is no more than wishful thinking to be acceptable to a non-Buddhist-oriented public. Such errors need serious and prompt correction if Buddhism's ethical tenor is to be safeguarded. This Dhammapada rendering of it as *paradāraṇ ca gacchati* makes its meaning crystal clear. It is in perfect agreement with other sutta references like in the Sāleyyaka Sutta at MN. I. 286 where in a very clear analysis of what is **acceptably good moral behaviour** [*dhamma-cariyā sama-cariyā*], the Buddha explains to the inquiring residents of Sālā [Sāleyyaka Brahmins] what is *kāmesu micchācārā* or improper sexual behaviour is. The Commentaries are equally emphatic all the time when they explain it as *methuna-samācāra* or sexual behaviour.

It is often said in Buddhist teachings that the **doing of what is said** in the *dhamma* is much more important than **the mere learning of it** [*Bahum 'pi ce sahitam bhāsamāno na takkaro hoti naro pamatto* Dhp. v. 19]. It is with this orientation that the Dhammapada presents these two verses. Whosoever fails to keep the five-fold precepts inculcated therein are said **to dig their own graves in this very life**. That is what *idh ' ev ' eso lokasmiṃ mūlaṃ khaṇati attano* means. The observance of the five-fold *pañca-sīla* precepts is an absolute guarantee for success in this very life. It arrests social decay and degeneration.

Viewing it from this down-to-earth angle, *pañcasīla* is also religiously evaluated from a socio-ethical angle in the Anguttara Nikāya from two different points of view, namely from **that of the individual** and **that of society**. Or putting it differently, from that of one's self and that of the other. Any breach of the said five precepts by an individual in society is viewed as **bringing dread and fear upon the rest of the community** who are reacting to such lapses. Therefore they are called *pañca-bhayāni* or **five-fold dreads** and are presented as the corrosive outcome or bye-products of the non-observance of *pañcasīla* [See Anguttara Nikāya III. 204 f.]. This is its **social dimension**, with the impact of the misdeeds in their breach on society.

The same text views it from the angle of the doer who, in the very process of not respecting and not paying heed to the socially indispensable injunctions of the *pañcasīla*, **becomes inimical to or an enemy of the society**. Therefore such behaviour patterns are called *pañca-verāni* or **five-fold enmities**. This we would consider to be the **individual dimension** in the breach of the injunctions of the *pañcasīla*. Buddhism is sensitively aware of this and in their breach such a miscreant is called a villain in society [*appahāya pañcaverāṇi dussīlo iti vuccati*. AN. III. 205].

He is definitely described as being qualified to be born in a lower state of existence, lower than human, in his life after death [*kāyassa bhedaṃ duppañño nirayaṃ so upapajjati* loc. cit.]. This is clearly part and parcel of the Buddhist pattern of thinking with regard to what we would legitimately call **Buddhist social ethics**. They are very much down-to-earth ethics, with their roots in human needs and their fulfillment, for which every human individual is answerable, with no more need to placate any other elsewhere, in fear of whom the humans are made to kneel in prayer.

Now to take up these injunctions one by one in their order of presentation, these items of *sīla* or *sikkhāpada* begin with the respect of the humans for all

forms of life, both human and animal. For in the very definition of humans, the Buddhists, quoting traditional authority, speak of them as possessing, above all others, powers of reasoning and judgement [*Porāṇā pana bhaṇanti manassa ussannatāya manussā*. VvA. 18 & KhpA. 123]. With a non-creationist theory in their religious thinking with regard to the world and everything therein, the Buddhists have no room to imagine that humans are higher grade products of creation for whose benefit everything else in the universe has been subsequently created by the same source of power who created them.

Therefore the Buddhists have to look upon the entire ecosystem as one assemblage of life, where the respect of one for the other is a vital ingredient for the survival of the whole. This is why the entire Buddhist grounding in morality or *sīla* begins with respect for life. We would think it illogical, as a product of the creation, for anyone to assume far greater power over other co-equal products of creation, even if one accepts a theory of creation. It is this respect for and the spirit of friendship with the entire bio-diversity of the universe that requires the *pañcasīla* to begin with its first injunction on respect for all forms of life - *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*. This includes all grades of life [*sabba-pāṇa-bhūta-hitānukampī*], both human and animal.

This concept has a very wide coverage, including terrestrial and even extra-terrestrial, those seen and unseen [*ditṭhā vā ye ca additṭhā*], near and far [*ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre*], as well as those that have already come into existence and those yet seeking existence [*bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā*]. One has to live in such a way, and not merely pray for, that all beings may be well and happy [*sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā*] - all these quotes are from Suttanipāta verse 147 in the Metta Sutta].

This respect for life of *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī* does not merely require that one does not himself kill any living being. The Dhammika Sutta of the Suttanipāta beautifully elaborates on these. Dwelling on *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*, it points out

three unmistakable areas: i. One shall not oneself indulge in destruction of life [*pāṇaṃ na hane*]. 2. Nor shall he get another to do the killing [*na ghāṭayeyya*]. It is equally important that 3. One shall not endorse or encourage such acts of destruction of life committed by others [*na c' ānujaññā hanataṃ paresaṃ* - all at Sn. v. 394].

The tradition of the Suttas handles this concept with ease everywhere, laying their own stress on different areas of ethical consideration. That is how one has to come to observe this injunction with sincerity and seriousness. The Kosala Samyutta brings to the fore the **self-example** principle of *attūpanāyika* when it says " In this manner, the self is dear to everyone. Therefore he who loves himself shall cause no injury to another [*Evaṃ piyo puthu attā paresaṃ tasmā na himse param attakāmo* SN. I. 75].

The VeĀudvāreyyaka Sutta [SN. V. 353 f.] in like manner makes a delightful presentation of this idea where it says that those who love their own lives and do not wish their lives to be destroyed should not only abstain from such crimes themselves but also prevent others from indulging in such acts. Note here the very desirable **collectivist participatory attitude to social ethics** which Buddhism endeavours to sponsor and promote all the time [*parañ ca pāṇātipātā veramaṇiyā samādapeti pāṇātipātā veramaṇiyā vaṇṇaṃ bhāsati*]. The Dhammapada calls such non-violence an ethic of the Ariyan [noble] creed whereby they do not stoop so low as to destroy life *Na tena ariyo hoti yena pāṇāni himsati Ahimsā sabba-pāṇānaṃ ariyo ' ti pavuccati*. Dh. v. 270].

The second injunction of the *pañcasīla*, i.e. *adinnādānā veramaṇī*, forbids the dispossession from the owners of their legitimately owned possessions. One shall not appropriate for oneself [*ādiyati*] such property which are not voluntarily given [*adinnaṃ*]. Even legally, this shall constitute an act of theft [*theyya-sarikhātaṃ*]. There is no restriction whatsoever in Buddhism for legitimately owned private possessions. Under Buddhist ethical considerations, this



legitimacy is covered both by the state law and the approval by the conscientious wise people of the land. This injunction safeguarding the ownership of property is based on the understanding that one's property and possessions are the primary sources of one's pleasure in life [*Paravittūpakaraṇan 'ti tass 'eva parassa vittūpakaraṇaṃ tuṭṭhijananam parikkhāra-bhaṇḍam*. MA. II. 129]. More than twenty-five centuries ago, Buddhism had provided for these basic human rights of security of life and security of possessions.

The third injunction of *kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī* concerns itself with propriety of relationships between the sexes. As pointed out already, there is no possibility whatsoever about mistaking on the interpretation of this injunction. Perhaps ancient Indian institutional thinking brought sex relationships legitimately within the domain of marriage. Therefore **both pre-marital sex and sex outside marriage** came to be **frowned upon as unacceptable**. Knowing adequately all evils and social disasters associated with both, Buddhism appears to have fallen in line with this thinking. Besides, Buddhism's attitude to sexual gratification in the light of its transcendental aspirations **would have necessitated a dignified and restrained attitude to sex** within its fold. It goes without saying that Buddhist monastic life begins by eschewing sex at the very outset. [See **PĀRĀJIKĀ**].

We have it on record that large numbers of teenage girls of diverse nationalities in North America, during the last decade of the twentieth century, came forward under the counselling of different denominations of the Christian church to declare in public that they were teenage girls, that they did not want sex and that sex was worth waiting for. Their numbers indeed reached thousands. We applaud the move as wholesome thinking for the human community. It is so much in harmony with what the Buddha propounded more than twenty-five centuries ago. And what a delightful blending of new thinking with the old.

Any one who is not insensitive to the evils of wildly free sex gratification of

today, unmindful of the proprieties of age of persons involved, personal relationships, of time and place cannot afford to place the telescope on the blind eye. Such disastrous consequences like unwanted pregnancies, unmarried mothers and fatherless homes, coupled with inevitable acts of bestial criminality like abortion, have undoubtedly been envisaged and reckoned with by the sober thinkers of the good old days.

Besides pre-marital sex, sex outside marriage was also deemed by Buddhists as something exceeding bounds of propriety [both social and religious]. Conjugal fidelity, deriving out of a decent sense of honesty, was held by the Buddhists at a high premium. Its breach was considered an act of grave social villainy. Harmony within the family, based on mutual trust between both partners in the home, both for its own sake and for the sake of healthy growth of children, was much sought after. So the third injunction of *kāmesu micchācārā* of *pañcasīla*, besides its attitude to gratification of sex desires, was a highly desirable social corrective, regulating harmony within the family and maintaining social coherence among families in the community through trust and mutual respect. We need today to understand its meaning and appreciate it worth more than ever before for the emergence of a loving and mutually respectful society of the two sexes, with an sense of decency.

The fourth in the *pañcasīla* pentad concerns itself with our behaviour through our words. When we say, what do we say and how do we say? Our speech can and has always to be tested and judged in terms of four criteria in terms of the impact on the people who hear us.. Honesty is the first priority, whether we speak what is really true or not [*musāvādā*]. Though not directly included under this injunction in the *pañcasīla*, **there are other sub-divisions of faulty speech against which the Buddhists must guard themselves**. The second of such speech is slander or tale-telling [*pisunā vācā*], i.e. speech which brings about discord and break up unity and coherence among friendly groups. The third is unfriendly and unkind harsh words [*pharusā vācā*]. Finally comes empty, worthless frivolous

speech [*samphappalāpā*].

Winding up the list of *pañcasīla sikkhāpada* comes the one relating to *surāmeraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī*. This endeavours to prevent people from falling into **lapses of judgement** as a result of **being under the effect of drugs or alcohol**. The best explanation about being in such a situation is witnessed in the Buddha's words to the monks at the scene where the monk Sāgata was found by the Buddha to be in a state of complete drunkenness. He asks the monks **whether one should partake of any drink**, having taken which **one loses one's faculty of judgement** [*Api nu kho bhikkhave taṃ pātabbaṃ yam pivitvā visaññī assā ' ti*. Vin. IV. 109 f.]. Based on this argument, Pācitiya No, 51 [a relatively lesser offence] comes to be laid down in Buddhist monastic discipline.

This appears to us, both socially and religiously, the best criterion to decide one's attitude to the consumption of alcoholic drinks or use of drugs. In society, all crimes are presumably traceable to diverse sorts of errors of judgement. It would not be incorrect to say that a vast majority of these are alcohol related. Quite often it could be unmeditated, but one gets to know quite often at court proceedings that pre-planned drunkenness in situations of serious crime is not uncommon. Because it provides the much-wanted Dutch courage for acts of violence. It robs the quality of mercy out of one's heart. It also robs the human mind of its restraints which are implanted therein through such socially stabilizing factors like modesty and concerns of propriety and decency.

At this stage it is amazingly interesting to go back two thousand five hundred years in human history and take a peep into what the Buddha, as the wise human sage of ancient India, has said about the evils of drinking in the Singālovāda Sutta [*surāmeraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānānuyoge ādīnava* at DN. III. 182 f.]. The Buddha has indicated six different items which we can classify as follows. Numbers 1. draining away one's financial resources here and now [*sandiṭṭhikā dhanañjānī*], 2. increasing quarrels and stifes [*kalaha-ppavaḍḍhanī*],

4. generating a bad reputation [*akitti-sañjananī*] and 5. tearing away one's sense of modesty and shame through voluntary or involuntary display of one's nakedness in their state of drunkenness [*kopīna-niddaṃsanī*]. All these are socially corrosive in this very life. Let each society with its own different cultural milieu, test their veracity and applicability, any time anywhere. Two more very revealing items which are medically invaluable complete the list. They are numbers 3. being a source of many diseases and ailments [*rogānam āyatanaṃ*] and 6. weakening one's wisdom or reducing the functioning of the brain [*paññāya dubbālīkaraṇī*].

The universally encyclopaedic value of these observations in the above sutta, we believe, cannot be overrated. We wish to draw special attention to item no. 5 [*kopīna-nidaṃsana*] of the above list which we have already translated as **tearing away one's sense of modesty through display of one's nakedness**. What this means in one's day to day life is only to be guessed in the Sutta, as to how and what happens. Probably many guesses can turn out to be correct. All other five items have unquestionable clarity.

On the other hand, the Commentary to this Sutta in the Sumaṅgalavilāsīnī, recorded for us in Pali by Venerable **Buddhaghosa about the fifth century A.D.** offers us a remarkably complete graphic picture of the situation contemplated. It tells that when people are drunk, i.e. are under the influence of alcohol, they do not know **that parts of their bodies which are normally kept covered are laid bare**. This means that they **go about naked**. Here is the text of the Commentary in Pali [*Kopīna-nidaṃsanī ' ti guyha-ṭhānaṃ hi vivariyamānaṃ hirīṃ kopeti vināseti tasmā kopīnan ' ti vuccati. Surā-mada-mattā ca taṃ taṃ aṅgaṃ vivarivā vicaranti. Tena tesam sā surā kopīnassa nidaṃsanato kopīna-nidaṃsanī ' ti vuccati. DA. III. 945*].

Not very long ago, we were fortunate enough to identify in the Musée Guimet in Paris a very small piece of Gandharan sculpture which totally depicts this

scene referred to in Buddhaghosa's Commentary. The earliest written down version of the Commentary known to us and is in Pali, goes back only to the 5th century. But this piece of sculpture which hails from Hadda in South Afghanistan dates back to a period several centuries earlier to Buddhaghosa. Did the Hellenistic artists who were undoubtedly commissioned by the pious Buddhists of Afghanistan in these early centuries of the Christian era get all these details for their amazingly delightful sculpture from a written version of the Commentary much earlier to Buddhaghosa or from an equally old oral tradition in any other language, shared by many schools?

Whatever it be, the existence in the early centuries of the Christian era of this true-to-the-letter depiction of the Commentarial theme of the Sigāla Sutta, beautifully carved out in stone, impresses us very much in two ways. 1. At this very early stage in Buddhist history and in these lesser known areas of early Buddhist homelands, the vibrant ethics of early Buddhism with their down-to-earth realism had been enthusiastically received. They did want to warn their people against evils of drinking. This particular piece of sculpture was used to adorn a flight of steps leading to a stupa which is a public place of worship. 2. A vibrant living tradition of Buddhist teachings, together with an indispensably accompanying system of explanations, by whatever name they came to be called, seems to have walked over to many lands where Buddhism went. Remains of Buddhist sculptures, discovered today even as ruins in many places, testify to this.

In Buddhism, one of the surest guaranties of being assuredly on the path to liberation in Nirvana is what is called *sotāpatti* or '**entry into the stream,**' i.e. the stream leading to Nirvana. To qualify for this, the following pre-requisites are specified [A. V. 182 ff.]. They fall into two groups. 1. First and foremost, one must rid oneself of the five dreads [*pañca bhayāni*] and five enmities [*pañca verāni*] which we have already discussed above. They provide for a basic correction of societal relationships. 2. Next come what are called the four pre-requisites or

basic ingredients of *sotāpatti* itself, i.e. *sotāpatti-aṅga*. They are firm faith [*avecca-pasāda*] in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Saṅgha and *ariyakanta-sīla* which constitute the totally perfect higher grade morality [*akhaṇḍehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi*] which the Commentary describes as *magga-phala-sīla* [AA. III. 304].

The *grand finale* in the process of developing the path to liberation in Nirvana is presented as a **thorough intellectual mastery and comprehension** [*paññāya sudiṭṭho hoti suppaṭividdho*] of the correct knowledge or *ariyo ñāyo*. What does this refer to? The same Anguttara Nikāya text quoted above [AN. IV. 184] explains this *ariyo ñāyo* in no uncertain terms as what we call **the basic and fundamental doctrine** of the Paṭiccasamuppāda or **Doctrine of Causal Genesis** which explains no less and no more than **the total phenomenon** of Samsāra and the release or **way out of it** [*paccayā paccayā* and *nirodhā nirodhā*] for the beings who are caught in it. Please note that in our Pali Buddhist texts it is **no general theory of causation** but one that specifically applies to the **samsāric** continuance of humans and their accompanying mass of *dukkha*.

Being endowed with these various items of loyalty or dedication, perfections and comprehended knowledge, one is assured that one is undoubtedly going to make an end of Saṃsāra by getting at total knowledge of the entire process. What we have endeavoured in this article is to point out the very vital role *sīla*-culture plays in this development process [note the role of *ariyakanta-sīla* indicated above. We also have, above all, to note how the items of *pañca-sīla*, under the name of *pañca-bhayāni* and *pañca-verāni* play their basic role of being social and religious correctives.



## PAṬĀCĀRĀ

In Buddhist Pali literature, the **story of Paṭācārā** is one of the most deflected and distorted in its passage **from the early canonical texts to the subsequent commentarial utterances**. Divergent literary traditions like those of the **Apadāna**, within this self same literary corpus, have unalterably changed the character, and along with it the religious aspirations and personality of this Bhikkhunī who has had a tremendous impact on the female community of the Buddha's day. This change has been least suspected. On the other hand, we are surprised that it has been reverentially accepted, then and now, in the literary histories of Sri Lanka and the neighbouring Buddhist countries. The change is admittedly dramatic and theatrical.

**Patācārā** in the original canonical version, we believe, reflects clearness of vision, firmness of resolve, determination and admirable qualities of leadership. She becomes unhesitatingly an object of admiration and veneration. The **Therīgāthā** text says that hundreds came searching her for her comforting message. The **Apadāna** tradition shows an unwarranted deflection in the alternation of her character with that of **Kisāgotamī** who, in the canonical version, is a pitiable character with multiple tragic deaths of dear ones on her way. The new **Paṭācārā**, in **Kisāgotamī's** tattered old garb, becomes a highly magnetic centre for sympathy and pity. We are inclined to maintain with the **Dīgha-bhāṇakas** that the **Apadāna** traditions on the whole are unacceptably deviant. [See below].

In this article, we think it worthwhile probing into this. We consider it more meaningful to take the records of the canonical texts as more authentic and trustworthy and as being nearer to the historical situations in the Sāsana than the words of compilers of legends of later centuries [which in fact have come to be challenged and rejected as done by the **Dīgha-bhāṇakas**].[DA. I. 15].

We shall begin with the canonical version of the story of our renowned Therī

Paṭācārā. Here are the three specific references to her in the **Therīgāthā**, each one recording a different situation in her life, which seems to have left a profound impact on the community in which she lived [Therīgāthā vv. 112-116, 117-121 and 127-132].

In the first **Therīgāthā** episode at vv. 112-116, we meet this apparently newly-ordained Bhikkhunī. She is fully conscious of the mission she has undertaken. In her own words, she is living a life of higher grade morality [*sīla-sampannā*], having pledged to live the religious life as enunciated by the Master [*satthu-sāsanakārikā*]. With her diligent and at the same time unconceited attitude to life [*akusītā anuddhatā*], she is determined to reach her goal in Nirvana [*nibbānaṃ nādhigacchāmi*]. These lines are in themselves self-evident and self-explanatory. They need no commentary.

In her own enlightened words, it is what she saw around her **that prompted her to her zealous approach in religious life**. She saw the young farmers around, energetically ploughing the fields and sowing seeds therein to raise crops and earn money thereby to feed their wives and children,

*Naṅgalehi kasaṃ khettaṃ bījāni pavapaṃ chamā  
putta-dārāni posentā dhanam vindanti mānavā.*

Thig. v. 112

Ploughing the fields with their ploughs  
and sowing the seeds on the ground,  
these men earn the money  
to feed their wives and children.

Translated by the author

Possessed of this same sense of devotion and dedication, **Paṭācārā** washed her feet one evening, and seeing the water at that point flowing down from the higher ground to the lower [*thalato ninnam āgatam*], she endeavoured to harness her own mind like bringing a thorough-bred horse under control [*tato cittaṃ*



***samādhemi assaṃ bhadraṃ ' va jāniyaṃ***]. Her salvation evidently was not a long way off. As she reached her cell and tried to lie down on her bed to sleep, she dipped the wick of her lamp in the oil, and with the blowing off of the lamp, she gained emancipation of her mind [***padīpass ' eva nibbānaṃ vimokkha ahu cetaso***].

Therī Paṭācārā's pre-enlightenment life story is lost to us here in the Therīgāthā. It was perhaps contained in the prose narratives [now lost] which usually accompanied these dramatic statements in verse. At any rate, the two sets of verses of Paṭācārā which follow in the **Therīgāthā** [vv. 117-121 & 127-132] are coherent and cogent enough for us to build a convincing picture of this Bhikkhunī and make no mistake about her identity.

Verses 127-132 which go under the title **Pañcasatā Paṭācārā**, include the major theme of her admonition to five hundred grieving women who are said to have come to her in search of a comforting message in the death of their own children. **Paṭācārā** is undoubtedly the pre-eminent authority who could speak on this subject with such personal experience and conviction. It is our firm belief that this down-to-earth analysis of the mothers' problem of loss of children handled here by **Paṭācārā** does rightly belong to **Paṭācārā** and to no other. See her straightforward reasoning.

Yassa maggaṃ na jānāsi āgatassa gatassa vā  
taṃ kuto āgataṃ puttaṃ mama putto ' ti rodasi.

Thig. v. 127

Whose roadway one knows not, whence he came or whither he went.  
Knowing not whence he came, you do appropriate him and now cry over  
his loss.

Translated by the author

What need is there to make this **Paṭācārā** emerge as a heroine from a

multiple tragedy of six deaths which is admitted by **Kisāgomaī** as her own, in her own words, in the canonical text of the Therīgāthā?

*Dve me puttā kālaṅkatā pati ca panthe mato kapanikāya  
mātā pitā ca bhātā ca dayhanti ekacitakāyam.  
Kisāgotaī therī suvimuttacittā imaṃ bhaṇī ' ti.*

See Thig. vv 218-223.

Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series Therīgāthā text adds to this further - *Itthaṃ sudaṃ Kisāgotamī therī gāthāyo abhāsi,*

BJTS. Therī gāthā. v. 223 f.

The Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā [DhpA. I. 260- 275 and DhpA. III. 432 f.], perhaps due to a deviant tradition derived from the **Apadāna**, which has also at the same time influenced the Commentarial tradition of the Therīgāthā Aṭṭhakathā, interchanges these two stories of Paṭācārā and Kisāgotamī and transfers this story of the dead son to Kisāgotamī, with the very dramatic story of the Buddha asking her to get some mustard seeds from a home where no death had ever occurred. What Kisāgotamī apparently sought from the Buddha was some medication [*bhesajjaṃ*] for the restoration to life of her dead child. But the Buddha, instead of making a blunt refusal to do so and turning away this grieving mother, wisely used this strategy. It was more profound a lesson to teach and to learn that there never was and never shall be a home in which no death has ever occurred than to perform a miracle through divine power whereby a single mortal son is raised from the dead.

The Therīgāthā makes no mention of any mustard seed story, neither with regard to Kisāgotamī nor Paṭācārā. But the Therīgāthā Commentary to Kisāgotami's verses, quoting the Apadāna [ThigA. p. 181], reveals the origin of this story.

*Tadā ekena sandiṭṭhā upetvābhi Sakkuttamaṃ  
avocaṃ dehi bhesajjaṃ puttasañjīvakaṃ ' ti bho.  
" Na vijjante matā yasmimṃ gehe **siddhatthakaṃ** tato  
āharā " ti jino āha vinayopāya-kovido.  
Tadā gamitvā Sāvattiṃ na labhiṃ tādisaṃ gharam  
kuto siddhatthakaṃ tasmā tato laddhā satimṃ ahaṃ.  
Kuṇapaṃ chaḍḍayitvāna upesiṃ lokanāyakaṃ. v. 23-26*

Two important items of information emerge from this. 1. This story of the mustard seeds goes back to the Apadāna as its primary source. 2. This Apadāna tradition also introduces the more or less Mahāyāna idea of *upāya-kau*©*alya* or maganimous strategy ascribed to the Buddha, referred to here as *vinayopā ya-kovido*.

This self-same **Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā** makes **Paṭācārā** play **Kisāgotamī**'s role of being the victim of the sixfold tragedy. But according to the **Therīgāthā**, [the canonical text] it is **Kisāgotamī** and not **Paṭācārā** who is the victim of this intense multiple tragedy of losing her two infant children, her husband, her mother and father and her brother, all on one single occasion. **Kisāgotamī** in the **Therīgāthā** speaks of it as the tragedy of her own life. See **Therīgāthā** v. 219 - 223 where she speaks of the death of her two sons and her husband etc.

*Dve me puttā kālakatā patī ca panthe mato kapaṇikāya  
mātā pitā ca bhātā ca ḍayhanti ekacitakāyaṃ. v. 219  
Ahaṃ amhi kantasallā ohitabhārā kataṃ me karaṇīyam  
**Kisāgotamī therī** suvimuttacittā **imaṃ bhaṇī** ' ti. v. 223*

It is also important to note that the above verse 219 of the **Therīgāthā** appears in a slightly different form in the **Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā** as an utterance of **Paṭācārā**.

*Ubho puttā kālakatā pante mayhaṃ patī mato  
mātā pitā ca bhātā ca ekacitakasmim̐ ḍayhare.*

DhpA. II. 266

This is the version preserved in the **Apadāna** [Ap. p. 115] to which our **Therīgathā Commentary** seems to be very much indebted.

With or without this confusion in the identification of **Paṭācārā** [Thig. vv. 112-121 and 127-132] and **Kisāgotamī** [Thig. vv. 213-223], these two hapless women, together with **Vāseṭṭhī** [Thig. vv. 133-138], show the world the very blessings of the Buddha's appearance in their midst, although he evidently never did lift a finger to raise their children from death. To them, as well as to all mankind, it was an all-time triumph over death. That is why we have in the wake of **Paṭācārā's** spiritual gain, as mentioned in the **Therīgāthā**, a first batch of thirty grieving mothers and after that yet another five hundred, more or less, reach the same heights that **Paṭācārā** herself reached. Thus **embedded in the theme** of **Paṭācārā** are the lessons on the **down-to-earth reality of death** with a universal message of which the world has all the time a need to learn.



## PABBĀJANĪYA-KAMMA

In Buddhist ecclesiastical law, **Pabbājanīya-kamma** is an **Act of Punishment** which **removes the offending monk [or monks] from the area of his residence** [Vin. II. pp. 9-15]. In the **Cullavagga Pali** referred to here, we are told of the story of the Assaji-Punabbasukā monks who were living in Kīṭāgiri who, by their over-familiarity and over-intimacy with the females of the community were bringing them into disrepute. However, it is clear that the people too were conniving with the miscreant monks. They spoke very highly of the over-friendly behaviour of their monks [*Amhākaṃ pana ayyā Assajipunabbasukā saṅhā sakhilā sukha-sambhāsā mihitapubaṅgamā ... tesaṃ kho nāma piṇḍo dātabbo ' ti*. Ibid. p. 11 =

Our venerable monks of the Assajipunabbasu group are gentle and friendly in speech, and take the lead in greeting us. They are pleasant in countenance. They should indeed be given offerings of food.]. A monk who arrived there on his way to see the Buddha found himself out of harmony with the residents of the area, almost to a point of not receiving any food from them.

A traditionalist conservative resident of the region who encountered the monk, took pity on him and took him home. He provided him with food and pleaded with him to report to the Buddha the state of affairs in that region. It is on hearing of this that the Buddha ordered Sariputta and Moggallana to go to Kiṭāgiri and have those miscreant monks removed from that area, i.e. carry out the Act of **Pabbājanīya-kamma** on them. Sariputta thereupon observed that those monks were known to be violent and rebellious [*caṇḍā te bhikkhū pharusā ' ti*. Ibid. 12].

The Buddha is supposed to have then promptly suggested that they, in that case, go with a large number of monks to meet force with force, if necessary [*Tena hi tumhe Sāriputtā bahukehi bhikkhūhi saddhiṃ gacchathā ' ti*. loc. cit.]. If and when the monks have behaved themselves properly under that punishment, the Sangha is authorised to withdraw it. This Act of Punishment is one among many which endeavour to safeguard the interests of the lay community against the inroads of the monks into their midst.



## PABHASSARA-CITTA

[an assumed original pure state of the human mind traced into Pali literature?]

The word *pabhassara* in Pali means **radiant** and **luminous**. Coupled with the word *citta* which means the **mind**, the compound word *pabhassara-citta* is believed to imply that the original human mind [or the mind at some stage, i .e.

anterior to a specific point of time] is radiant. We believe the genesis of this idea of a *pabhassara-citta* is traceable to a few references in the Anguttara Nikaya [AN. I.10 - four references.]. A few more slightly different references are found at Ibid. 254 & 257. These latter, we shall examine at the end.].

The references \$ 9 and \$ 10 at AN. I.10 do not carry a compound as *pabhassara-citta* which means a **radiant mind**. The Pali used there predicatively reads as *pabhassaram idam bhikkhave cittam* which means ' **this mind, O Bhikkhus, is radiant.**' The stress perhaps is on the idea of it being so ' **at a particular point of time.**' This statement is further qualified at \$ 9 with the words ' *tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkilittam* ' *ti.* ' This appended qualifying second statement means ' **and this mind is defiled or contaminated by incoming defilements.**' We shall examine these statements in due course.

Do not fail to note that \$ 10 here presents to us a completely different idea in its second appended statement when it says, blowing as it were hot and cold in the same breath, that the said mind **is liberated**. This is what \$ 10 says now of the same *citta* [about which it said earlier, in complete agreement with the same at \$ 9 in the first half: *pabhassaram idam bhikkhave cittam*]. In the second appended statement it says that ' **this mind is liberated from or is freed of the incoming defilements** [*tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttam* ' *ti.*]. The word *upakkilittam* of \$ 9 which means ' **defiled** ' is replaced in \$ 10 with the word *vippamuttam* which means **liberated or released**. No indication at all is given in the text as to how and when this all important change takes place.

We cannot fail to observe here that *upakkilittam* and *vippamuttam* used in these two contexts **are polarized concepts**. Of the same item of **this *citta* or *idam cittam***, it is said:

1. On the one hand in \$ 9 it is said that *citta* is radiant [*pabhassara*] but stands contaminated by or on account of incoming defilements [*āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkilittam* ' *ti.* '].

2. On the other, it is said in § 10 that this same *pabhassara citta* is totally freed of or liberated [*vippamutta*] of incoming defilements. [How and when, we are not told.]. These statements must certainly refer to two different stages in time. There can be no simultaneity or co-existence. Nor can we concede a recurrence [or an on and off occurrence] in this process of contamination and purification. It has to be a complete and final change from one to the other - from *upakkiliṭṭha* to *vippamutta*.

In these what appear to be categorical philosophical statements, it is important to ask about whose *citta* or mind are we speaking at the moment. Are we speaking of 1. the **samsāric being** or 2. the one who has **gone beyond it** or got out of it? If it is the **samsāric** being, we are not to forget his identity as to why and how he is rolling on in **samsāra**. We are quite sure a **samsaric** being is not just a spark of a primary divine source like *Brahman* or *Paramātman* whose divinity and divine grandeur the humans would invariably have to carry within themselves. Are we here attempting to look for parallels with Indian religious concepts within our own stock in trade?

On the other hand, no matter where the **samsāric** course of each one began [*pubbā koṭi na paññāyati*], each one of us now roll on in it because of our own **samsāric** contamination. Note what is said of each one of us that we are victims of *nīvaraṇa* and *samyojana* in our samsāric journeying [*avijjā-nīvaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhā-samyojanānaṃ sandhāvataṃ samsarataṃ*. SN. III.149, 151]. It is in our nature that we carry these defilements with us through **samsāra** or more precisely, that the defilements drag us along through samsāra. It would therefore be a **gross error of judgement** if one said, while talking of **samsāric** beings, that **the mind of an unborn child in the mother's womb is radiant and untarnished**.

Let us now take a look at what the Mahāmālunkya Sutta says on this subject. "A little baby lying on his back has no notions of *sīla*. How then can he have incorrect attitudes like *sīlabbata-parāmāsa* towards *sīla*? But **he has deeply**

embedded in him underlying traces of *sīlabbata-parāmāsa* " [*anuseti tv 'ev ' assa sīlabbata-parāmās 'ānusayo*. MN. I. 433]. The word *anuseti* or *anusaya* here stand for what we call **trans-samsāric karmic residues** which are transmitted from one phase of life of an individual to his next life. Each one of us has a quota of these within us at birth, brought in by each one at conception. The sutta says this of a range of *anusaya* covering *kāmarāga* and *vyāpāda*. [loc. cit]. Some modern thinkers, medical men and psychologists are very close to us in thinking when they dare to say that **they have every reason to believe that the mind of the unborn child in mother's womb is pre-monitored**. This concept of pre-monitoring **precludes us from entertaining an idea of a pure mind in the mother's womb**.

In our opinion, speaking of a radiant mind for the humans which is free from defilements, is a possibility only at the final stage of *āsavakkhaya* or termination of all defilements in the Nirvanic state. The very concept, we believe, is a visualisation from many possible angles, of **what it is like on reaching the state of Nirvana**.

Here is a bit of indispensably related evidence on the subject. When the question is asked in the Kevaddha Sutta [DN. I. 223] as to where the four great elements of which the universe is believed to be constituted come to a complete state of non-existence [*aparisesā nirujjhanti*], the Buddha is said to have pleaded for a re-phrasing of the question to read as " Where will the four great elements have no hold [*Kattha āpo ca paṭhavī ca tejo vāyo na gādhati loc. cit.*]." The question is then further extended to read as " Where will dimensional notions of long and short, large and small, and notions of wholesome and unwholesome hold no sway? Where will the psychic and material bases of human existence [*nāmañ ca rūpañ ca*] completely cease to be? " The question is diverted by the Buddha from what was originally **an external cosmic one to a personal individualized one**. This shift of accent must be clearly noted.

It is tremendously important to note here the complete change of emphasis



and change of direction in the answer provided in the sutta [*tatra veyyākaraṇaṃ bhavati.*] The purpose of the question is first apprehended. Such a speculated stage [as in Nirvana] is possible only where the **samsāric** process of human life is believed to be capable of being completely ended. We have to admit here of the existence of two equally valuable and equally compatible traditions on this issue, of looking at Nirvana, as to what happens when one gets there. In addition to our Kevaddha Sutta, we also have a very cryptic but very meaningful reference in the Samyutta Nikaya. The Samyutta Nikaya seems to earnestly endeavour to combine the realities of the physical world with the religious truths of Buddhism. They are beautifully combined in just four lines.

*Kuto sarā nivattanti / kattha vaṭṭaṃ na vaṭṭati.  
kattha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca / asesam uparujjhati.* SN. I. p. 15

The first line alone of the above verse from the Samyutta appears to concern itself with phenomena of the physical world - Where do flowing rivers cease to flow? The remaining three lines refer to religio-philosophical issues of

1. the termination of the individual process of samsāric continuance propelled by individualized *viññāṇa* and
2. the cessation of the inter-play of the psycho-physical dualities of mind and matter [*nāma & rūpa*] of the humans.

Admittedly the Kevaddha Sutta questioning appears more searching and more comprehensive than that of the Samyutta.

In the Kevaddha Sutta which appears more mature to us, the answer begins, we believe, with what happens to the carrier of human life in **samsāra**, namely *viññāṇa*. Let us begin with the original Pali in the Kevaddha Sutta [*loc, cit*].

*Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ.*

Samsāric Carrier Consciousness or *viññāṇa* at the stage of the arahant, i.e. the one who has attained Nirvana is, undemonstrable [*anidassanaṃ*]. Do not fail to be impressed by the profundity and depth of wisdom reflected in this single line. We shall now immediately get to the Alagaddūpama Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya where the Buddha himself is seen handling this same theme with great clarity.

In Buddhism, the person released in Nirvana [with no time space relationships] is referred to as *vimutta-citta*. It is said of him that even if the gods in heaven with Indra or Brahma or Prajapati as their chiefs search for his *viññāṇa*, trying to find its specific location as to where it is centered on [*idaṃ nissitaṃ tathāgatassa viññānan ' ti*. MN. I. 140], they shall never succeed. For the location of the psyche of such a **liberated person** cannot be found even in this very existence [*diṭṭhe ' vā ' haṃ bhikkhave dhamme tathāgataṃ ananuvejjo ' ti vadāmi*. Ibid.]

This statement in the Alagaddūpama Sutta is in complete consonance with the Kevaddha Sutta reference to *viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ*. Here we are quite sure we are speaking of **the liberated person** [*vimutta-cittaṃ bhikkhuṃ*], i.e. the one who has reached **his** Nirvanic state. One cannot point at the exact location of the *viññāṇa* of such a person, even here and now, in this very existence, as lying perched on or tethered to [*idaṃ nissitaṃ tathāgatassa viññānan ' ti*].

It is in the same context that the Kevaddha Sutta refers to the *viññāṇa* of the arahant as being 'totally luminous or radiant' [*anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ*]. To us, this also is no less and no more than the quality of Nirvanic *viññāṇa*. Through the riddance of all defilements or *āsavakkhaya* what else could the Nirvanic *viññāṇa* be, except totally radiant and luminous? The Commentary to the Sutta seems to completely miss this point [DA. II. 393]. Perhaps a growing up divergent tradition regarding the nature of Nirvana seems to be pulling in an entirely different direction and confusing the whole issue. We do not feel it is even worth taking it

up for comment.

*Viññāṇa* at this stage is non-regenerative. Therefore with its cessation, everything else of a **samsāric** being ceases to be [*viññāṇassa nirodhena etth ' etam uparujjhati* DN. I. 223].

While probing into the dubious concept of *pabhassara-citta* in Buddhist literature, we have laid hands on a few bits wonderfully revealing evidence with regard to what early Buddhism believes to be **the true reality of the Nirvanic ending** of a **samsāric** being. It is being examined with regard to the believed in realities of the phenomenal world as well as to the religio-philosophical analysis of the so-called being.

We choose to hold the view, from the evidence examined so far, that the so-called radiance of the human mind [*sabbato pabham* or *pabhassaram*] is a state which is predictable only of the liberated mind [*vimutta-citta*] of the arahant or Nirvanic being. It is only such a mind which is accurately predictable as being *āgantukehi upakkilesehi vipparamuttam* as at AN. I. 10. We also cannot subscribe to the view of a radiant mind of a **samsāric** being at any time anywhere before his *āsavakkhaya* in Nirvana. We fail to ignore his **samsāric** inheritance by way of *āsaya* and *anusaya* which pursue the **samsāric being** from birth to birth.

We also like to refer to, before we conclude, to the interest shown in our text to positively assert the non-worldliness of the Nirvanic state.

1. The Alagaddūpama Sutta categorically asserts that the mind of the liberated one [*vimutta-citta*], while living his human life here and now, is in no way involved with things of the world [*idam nissitam tathāgatassa viññāṇan ' ti* MN. I. 140]. This pertains to his psychic relations with the world in which he still continues to live.
2. Both the Kevaddha Sutta [DN. I. 223] and the Samyutta [SN. I. 15] refer to the complete cessation of *nāma* and *rūpa* [i.e. at death, which means no more

rebirth] on the attainment of Nirvana [*Ettha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca asesam uparujjhati*].

3. Kevaddha Sutta alone goes still further, with an obvious true grasp of the basic Buddhist teachings, to say that on the cessation or non-productivity of *viññāṇa*, everything ceases to function towards regeneration [*Viññāṇassa nirodhena etth ' etaṃ uparujjhati*]. This specially mentioned role of *viññāṇa* is no part of the original question which only speaks of the final perishing or cessation of [only] *nāma* and *rūpa* which is the physical reality of life. This sensitivity to the role of *viññāṇa* as the **true life giver** to *nāma-rūpa* comes out in this special mention of the role of *viññāṇa* here.
4. In a world based on no more than time space realities, even the attempt to understand Nirvana did not go beyond these. So in the Kevaddha, they searched for a place where the four great elements *paṭhavī āpo tejo vāyo* would completely cease to be. The Samyutta would be even more down to earth and add to the list places from where rivers stop flowing [*Kuto sarā nivattanti* SN. I. 15]. The Udāna refers further to the presence of the sun and the moon as well as light and darkness.

*Yattha āpo ca paṭhavī ca tejo vāyo na gādhati  
na tattha sukkā jotanti ādicco nappakāsati  
na tattha candimā bhāti tamo tattha na vijjati.* Udāna p. 9

In Buddhism, **Nirvana is obviously beyond and outside time space considerations**. It is **unmistakably personal and individual**. All that we need to talk about and learn with regard to Nirvana is only in terms of *Viññāṇa* on the one hand as well as *nāma* and *rūpa* on the other.

Before we conclude, let us examine the second set of references from Anguttara Nikaya [AN. I.254 ff.] mentioned earlier in this essay. Here too, the word *pabhassara* is used with reference to the mind or *citta*. But it is in a slightly

different context. **Pabhassara** obviously carries with it its original meaning of radiance, brilliance or brightness. But we believe it is more to imply the idea of robustness or being in a good healthy state. Another adjective **pabhaṅgu** which means perishable or liable to break is closely associated with it in contrast or in the negative [**na pabhaṅgu**].

When a bhikkhu, without excessive application [**kālena kālaṃ**] directs his mind moderately to diversified patterns of reflection, he acquires this healthy state of mind called **pabhassara** [*Yato ca kho bhikkhave adhicittamanuyutto bhikkhu kālena kālaṃ samādhinimittaṃ manasi karoti...paggāhanimittaṃ ...upekkhānimittaṃ manasi karoti taṃ hoti cittaṃ muduñ ca kammaniyañ ca pabhassarañ ca na ca pabhaṅgu sammā samādhiyati āsavānaṃ khayāya* AN. I. 257]. The context in which the word **pabhassara** is used here definitely fixes it that **pabhassara** is **a state of the mind which one brings about through diligent and patient cultivation**. It is steady and not liable to get disrupted [**na ca pabhaṅgu**] and is ready to get settled [**sammā samādhiyati**] to be harnessed for higher spiritual attainments [**āsavānaṃ khayāya**].

This reference from the Anguttara Nikaya immediately brings to our mind the Sāmaññaphala Sutta reference in the Digha Nikaya which speaks of a very similar achievement of the mind through a well defined process of culture [*So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgane vigatūpakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye thite ānejjappatte nāṇadassanāya cittaṃ abhinīharati* DN. I. 76]. It is to be remembered that this type of relatedness in Buddhist teachings, though found scattered here and there, is not merely accidental. It reflects a closely related well-strung pattern of religious culture in Buddhism.



## PARIVĀSA 1.

In Buddhist monastic discipline, **PARIVĀSA 1** is a form of derivative punishment associated with the **Saṅghādisesa** offences [a group of thirteen = *therasa saṅghādisesā*]. On the commission of a **Saṅghādisesa** offence, the miscreant is thereby liable to be immediately put under the **six-day penalty** of **MĀNATTA** [*chārattaṃ mānattaṃ deti*], entailing the **curtailment of privileges and prestige enjoyed**. Such an offence is required to be confessed forthwith. For every day of concealment of a **Saṅghādisesa** offence, the offender is first put under this penalty of **PARIVĀSA**, the duration of which may theoretically extend even up to sixty years or more.

According to the Cullavagga, a monk who is guilty of concealing a Saṅghādisesa offence which he has committed, must go before the Saṅgha and confess to them his error.

He must then request the Saṅgha to impose on him first the Parivāsa penalty for the number of days the offence had been concealed. It is only after the offender has behaved himself perfectly well under the penalty of Parivāsa for concealing his offence, that Mānatta, the six-day penalty for the actual Saṅghādisesa offence, would be imposed [Vin. II. 40]. Because of the issue of the concealment of the offence, this penalty of PARIVĀSA came to be called Paṭicchanna Parivāsa.

The Pātimokkha as a manual of disciplinary procedure appears to have maintained an authoritative enforcement of penalties and punishments, even though on an impersonal note. The Gopakamoggallāna Sutta clearly recognizes this when it says that punishment is meted out not on the authority of persons but solely on the authority of the Dhamma and instructions laid down [Tasmiṃ ce bhaññamāne hoti bhikkhussa apatti hoti vītikkamo tam mayaṃ yathādhammaṃ yathāsattaṃ kāremā ' ti. Na kira bhavanto kārenti dhammo no kāretī 'ti. MN. III. 10]. The injunctions of the Pātimokkha introduce this penalty of Parivāsa with a

note of compulsion [tena bhikkhunā akāmā parivatthabbaṃ Vin. III. 186].



## PARIVĀSA 2.

In Buddhist monastic discipline, **Parivāsa 2** requires that a follower of any other religious order [*añña-titthiya-pubba*] who wishes to join the order of the Buddhist Saṅgha as a *pabbajita* has to be put under probation [*parivāso databbo*] for period of four months. In the Kukkuravatika Sutta [MN. I. 391] the Buddha himself tells Seniya who was a naked ascetic practising the 'canine way' [*kukkura-vata*] of the general Buddhist practice of **Titthiyaparivāsa** when he sought admission to the Buddhist monastic life [*Yo kho Seniya aññatitthiyapubbo imasmiṃ dhammavinaye ākaṅkhati pabbajjaṃ ākaṅkhati upasampadaṃ so cattāro māse parivasati*. MN. I. 391]. During this period, the probationer must conduct himself honourably to the satisfaction of the Bhikkhus in authority. Thereafter they admit him as a bhikkhu, conferring on him *pabbajjā* and *upasampadā*. However **Aggika Jaṭilas** and **Sākiyas** are exempted from this ruling.

The Buddha also makes it clear that in the case of special applicants about whose temperaments and aptitudes are adequately and personally known, these conditions could be waived [*Api ca m ' ettha puggalavemattatā veditā ' ti*. MN. I. 494]. So we see in the Mahāvaccagotta Sutta referred to here, Vacchagotta promptly receives both his *pabbajjā* and *upasampadā* from the Buddha himself. On the other hand, these earnest and sincere applicants declare to the Buddha that **they would not mind being under probation even for four years for the benefit of entry into the Sāsana** [*Sace bhante aññatitthiyapubbā ... ahaṃ cattāri vassāni parivasissāmi*. loc. cit.]. In the Māgandiya Sutta [MN. I. 512] Magandiya Paribbājaka gets admitted into the Sāsana in the very same manner.

We must not fail to mention here about a marked divergence that has

developed in course of time between the earlier Sutta tradition and what we believe to be a subsequent Vinaya practice with regard to the imposition of *Aññatitthiya Parivāsa* on applicants from other religious creeds to join the Buddhist Monastic Order. Suttas like the Mahāvaccagotta and Māgandiya we have referred to above give us the unmistakable impression that the applicants are put under probation while still remaining in their lay status. It is only if they have satisfied the supervising monks after the four months' period of probation [*āradha-cittā bhikkhū*] that they would ordain the probationer as a monk [*Catunnaṃ māsānaṃ accayena āradha-cittā bhikkhū pabbājenti upasampādentī bhikkhu-bhāvāya*. MN. I. 391].

But the Vinaya practice of the Khandhakas with regard to this practice seems to be completely deflected when compared with the earlier Sutta tradition we have already referred to. The Khandhakas ordain the applicant straight-away and then put him under probation. Then on application by him after four months confer on him *upasampadā*. This is in marked contrast to the earlier but now fossilized version of the Sutta tradition.



## PAVĀRAṆĀ

### - Act of invitation or calling upon

This is an ecclesiastical act of the Buddhist Saṅgha [of *upasampanna* or senior-status monks], connected with their three months' observance of the *vassāvāsa* or **Rains' Retreat**. The word means 'calling upon' or 'inviting'. The *upasampanna* monks living in a specific demarcated residence area called a *sīmā* are required, once a year, to live together under one roof for a period of three months, attending more meticulously to their religious development. The observance of the Rains' Retreat also prevents the senior monks, in the eyes of



the public, from causing damage to the newly sprouting seedlings during the rainy season.

During this Rains' Retreat, the monks shall not live away from their pledged place of residence for any longer than six days. They shall return to their place of residence by the seventh day [*sattāha-karaṇīyena*]. On concluding the three months' retreat, they shall meet in solemn conclave, and first and foremost, the senior most monk shall kneel before the congregation and call upon the entire participating membership to announce to him any guilt of his they have seen, heard or suspected of him [*Sanīghaṃ āvuso pavāremi diṭṭhena vā sutena vā parisāṅkhāya vā. Vadantu maṃ āyasmanto anumāpaṃ upādāya. Passanto paṭīkarissāmi*. Vin. I. 159] Everyone in turn makes this request before the congregation, **undertaking to make amends**, if the accusation is seen to be acceptable.

The benefits resulting from this form of **self-correction** are given as:

- a. being agreeable to and tolerant of one another - *aññamaññānulomatā*.
- b. making amends for the wrongs done by safeguarding against their recurrence - *āpattivuṭṭhānatā*.
- c. developing a regard and respect for the rules of discipline: *vinayapurekkhāratā*.

Vin. I. 159

It is clear that originally both the fortnightly recital of the **Pātimokkha** or *Pātimokkhuddesa* and the annual *Pavāraṇā* at the end of the three months of the Rains' Retreat or *Vassāvāsa* were meant to be institutions to maintain and safeguard monastic discipline, and to prosecute and punish offenders when and where the need arose. **Law enforcement** undoubtedly appears to have been their major role. But in course of time they are seen to have lost their sense of

direction and hence their vitality. Instead of serving the purpose for which they were originally intended, they seem to have acquired a lot more external ritualistic glamour and solemnity.

New concepts like the collective unity of the corporate body of the Saṅgha [in the face of possible threats of splintering] as against their spiritual purity seems to have forced themselves to the fore. A very crystallized image of this new trend is witnessed in the **Vinaya Vinicchaya** where it says that the fortnightly recital of the **Pātimokkha** or the **Uposatha** is for the purpose of unification of the Saṅgha [*Uposatho samaggattho*] while the **Pavāraṇā**, mind you which is performed only once a year, serves the purpose of purification of the Saṅgha [*visuddhatthā pavāraṇā*]. Both quotations from Vinayavinicchaya p. 90. v. 2599]



## PĀCITTIYA

The Pācittiyas [the two groups - **Nissaggiya Pācittiya** and Pure **Pācittiya** put together] make the largest group of *sikkhāpada* in the Pātimokkha collection. The Bhikkhu Pātimokkha has 30 Nissaggiya Pācittiya + 92 Pācittiya [*dve-navuti* Vin. IV. p. 174], while the Bhikkhuni Pātimokkha has 30 Nissaggiya Pācittiya + 166 Pācittiya [*cha-satthi-satā* Ibid. p. 345]. In both instances, the twin Pācittiya groups total up in each case to 112 and 196, i.e. more than half the total collection of *sikkhāpada* in each Pātimokkha. Read about Nissaggiya Pācittiya in a separate article under the name **NISSAGGIYA-PĀCITTIYA**.

The Pacittiya as monastic offences, barring the **Nissaggiya** which **entail the forfeiture as a penalty of the illegally obtained or possessed articles**, do not carry with them any specified penalties or punishments to be imposed on the miscreants who violate those *sikkhāpada*. In this respect, they stand in marked contrast to the major offences of **Pārājikā** and **Saṅghādisesa** [See **PĀRĀJIKĀ** and

## SAÜGHĀDISESA].

The Pācittiya pertain to the safeguarding and correction of monastic behaviour of a very diverse range. They cover moral rectitude, social propriety, mutual relationships of monks and nuns etc. A few studies of their genesis individually would be very revealing with regard to the evolution of the **legalized corpus of monastic discipline** called the **Vinaya Piṭaka**.

Let us take the very first *sīla* precept which forbids the destruction of life of any sort, whether human or animal [*pāṇātipātā - veramaṇī*] which specifically requires love and respect for all forms of life [*sabba-pāṇa-bhūta-hitānukampī*]. This is the *sīla* injunction applicable to all grades of Buddhists, irrespective of being monk or layman.

In the evolution of Buddhist monastic discipline **from one of moral and ethical regulation** to a **system of legalized enforcement**, many noteworthy changes seem have taken place. But they are apparently changes of stresses and values seen only on the surface. On the other hand, extremely diligent care and caution has been exercised to eliminate any damage to the spirit of the early religion.

In accordance with the basic Buddhist teachings, destruction of life had to rank religiously as **the gravest of crimes in the hands of a Buddhist**. That is undoubtedly the reason why it heads the list of *sīla* injunctions. So it had, equally well, **to find a place among the four grave crimes of Pārājikā** associated with a **Buddhist monk of senior status**. At the same time, the Buddhist life of renunciation as a monk [*bhikkhu* or *pabbajita*] also necessitated the complete eschewal of sex life. This is **the hall-mark of Buddhist renunciation**. Therefore in the group of the four grave crimes of Pārājikā, indulgence in sex [*methuna-dhamma*] gains priority over all others and comes to head the list.

In Buddhist legal history, a noteworthy change takes place here in the Pārājika group **when destruction of life comes to be carefully divided into two**, in

terms of legal requirements, as human and animal. Although religiously desirable, it would not be legally acceptable to place destruction of human and animal life on an equal footing in terms of prosecution and punishment. In these matters, the Buddha seems to have even paid due attention to the laws of the state. In formulating the injunction on **Pārājikā** on theft, he is said to have consulted a former Minister of Justice, who by then had joined the ranks as a monk, in fixing the value of a stolen article to be supportive of the prosecution and punishment.

So we discover item No. 3 of the **Pārājikā** group [*manussa-viggaha*] dealing with **man slaughter** and **other forms of aiding and abetting suicide** listed as being equally offensive. As usual with the **Pārājikā** offences, man slaughter gets an *upasampanna* monk unquestionably expelled from the Order. The concern here is only about human life. This legal revisionist approach appears, as it were, to leave a yawning gap in **the Buddhist ethical approach of their respect for all life**. In situations like these, it must be remembered, it is the **Pācittiya** group which comes forward to accommodate all new situations which keep emerging in this process of legal re-structuring.

At Vin. IV. p. 124 we are told about a monk by the name of Udāyī who frivolously kept hunting down crows, much to the annoyance of fellow monks. We find a new **Pācittiya** rule [**No. 61**] being formulated, making **destruction of animal life** [*tiracchānagata-pāṇa*] **a listed offence**. Everybody shall know that it is a monastic offence to destroy life of any form. Therefore another safeguard against this had to be built, outside the codified law of the Pātimokkha, in the Khandhaka Vinaya, under the **never-to-be-done** or **Akaraṇīyāni** which are to be made known to every monk immediately on reaching the higher status of *upasampadā*.

Here is **Akaraṇīya 3** which reads that no *upasampanna* monk shall knowingly destroy the life of any living being, even of an ant [*Upasampannena bhikkhunā sañcicca pāṇo na jīvītā voropetabbo antamaso kuntakipillikaṃ upādāya*. Vin. I.

97]. These two provisions on the legal side, together with *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī* from the area of *sīla*, safeguard that no *upasampanna* monk shall destroy life of any sort or any grade.

Let us now cite one more example from the **Pācittiya** group itself to reveal the **holdall** nature of this very miscellaneous collection. It had to accommodate any thing and many things. **Pācittiya 11** presents to us a rule regarding destruction of plant life by an *upasampanna* monk - Any *upasampanna* monk who destroys plant life is guilty of a **Pācittiya** offence [*bhūtagāmapātavyatāya pācittiyaṃ* Vin, IV. p. 34]. This rule is obviously more in consonance with the contemporary Jain belief that all plants are living things with one *indriya* or life-faculty [*ekindriyaṃ pāṇam*]. But the proto-commentary in the text cited above gives us the story of an injury caused to a *devatā* by a monk, in the act of cutting a tree in which the *devatā* resided, while repairing his own place of residence.

Among other interesting ones in this mixed collection of **Pācittiyas** is **No. 51** which deals with the consumption of alcoholic drinks by monks [*surāmerayapāne pācittiyaṃ* Vin. IV. 110]. It is to be noted that this item had found no place in the early collection of moral injunctions or *sīla* for the monks [See DN. I. 63 f.]. The sensitivity and sensibility to the evils of this on the part of monks was, perhaps justifiably, assumed. As far as the lay community was concerned, this was thoroughly and adequately dealt with [See Dhammapada vv. 246-7 ; DN. III. 182]. On a very down-to-earth issue of sanity of judgement, a ban on the consumption of alcohol was imposed on the monks under this **Pācittiya 51**.

**Pācittiyas 1-3** reveal several *sīla* injunctions dealing with incorrect patterns of speech being brought under a legal framework. They are 1.

*sampajānamusāvāde pācittiyaṃ* = offence of deliberate lying, 2. *omasavāde pācittiyaṃ* = offence of harsh and cruel words and 3. *bhikkhupesūñṇe pācittiyaṃ* = slander causing dissension among bhikkhus [See DN. I. p. 63 f.]. Herein we discover a deliberate bid and concerted attempt to safeguard the moral tone and

spiritual elegance of the Buddhist Saṅgha with the assistance of a peripheral legal scaffolding. The **Pācittiya** being different from the **Pārājika** and the **Saṅghādisesa** in scope and content, have not the same powers of prosecution and punishment. However, they seem to continue to serve all the time as peripheral props, upholding the main structure of the **Sāsana**.

A few observations about the **Pācittiya** of the Bhikkhunis before we bring this article to a close. **Pācittiya** is not only the largest of all the groups of *sikkhāpada* laid down for the Bhikkhunis [totalling 166] as is also in the case of Bhikkhus, but is also the group which has an overwhelmingly **large collection of additional rules**, amounting to ninety-six, which is four more than the entire group of Bhikkhu Pācittiya. Of the ninety-two Bhikkhu Pācittiya, Bhikkhunis take seventy which they hold in common with the Bhikkhus. The cases of inapplicability come mostly on the basis of gender difference. \*

\* For further details, see **Buddhist Monastic Discipline** by Jotiya Dhirasekera [1982], Ph. D. thesis written in 1964 by the present author while he was a layman.



## PĀṬIDESANĪYA

**Pāṭidesanīya** is a group of ecclesiastical offences or *āpatti* contained in the **Pātimokkhas** of the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunis [Group No. 6 in the Collection. See Vin. IV. 174 ff. and 346 ff.]. The word itself means **to be declared** or **to be made known**. His or her guilt has to be voluntarily confessed [*paṭidesetabbam tena bhikkhunā gārayham āvuso dhammam āpajjim asappāyam pāṭideanīyam tam paṭidesemī' ti.*] They are four in number for the monks and eight in number for the nuns of senior status in the Sāsana [*upasampannā*].

They all pertain to **censurable lapses of conduct** [*gārayham dhammam*]

*āpajjim*], relating to obtaining of alms food and consuming them in unseemly manner into which members of both groups could slip. These apparently led to considerable public criticism and disapproval. The rules connected with the monks also show **unhealthy partisan loyalties of nuns towards monks** on which the Buddha **expected the monks to be watchful and severely critical and firm**. Nuns of the **Chabbaggiyā** group, supervising at alms gatherings the plentiful serving of their own monks to the neglect of others, is a good example of this [See Vin. IV. 177 f.].



## PĀTIMOKKHA

The word **Pātimokkha** is used [generally in the plural as *ubhayāni Pātimokkhāni*] to refer to the two sets of codified rules [*sikkhāpadāni*] which govern the behaviour in word and deed of monks and nuns of senior status [*upasampannā*] in the Sāsana. It is also used to refer to the recital of these which is referred to as *suttuddesa* or *Pātimokkhuddesa* at the fortnightly assemblies [*uposatha*] of the Saṅgha. We maintain that the reference to the **Pātimokkha** as a **separate book of rules alone** of the Vinaya Piṭaka is historically a later development. It is **the result of extraction into the form of a manual of the rules alone** [at a somewhat later date], **for the purpose of using as a text during the recital at the Uposatha** [*Pātimokkha + uddesa*].

The use of the already laid down *sikkhāpada* for recital at the fortnightly meetings is said to have been recommended by the Buddha himself. In the Vinaya Mahāvagga [Vin. I. 102] he is seen speculating on this [*Yaṃ nūnāhaṃ yāni mayā bhikkhūnaṃ paññattāni sikkhāpadāni tāni nesam pātimokkhuddesaṃ anujāneyyaṃ*]. Here we must not lose sight of the original motivation for the laying down of the *sikkhāpada*. The *sikkhāpada* for the regulation of monastic life is the first concern. Their recital fortnightly as a further aid is the secondary

concern. At the very outset, the rules needed their accompanying details for their proper enforcement.

We feel the need here for a couple of serious corrections with regard to the evolution of the **Pātimokkha**.

As for the size and constituents of the Pātimokkha, let it be noted that its contents fall into two major categories. Even the great Commentator Buddhaghosa is aware of it and he records it with precision. In his general introduction to the history of Buddhist Pali literature in the **Sumaṅgalavilāsinī** [i.e. Dīgha Nikāya Commentary / DA. I. p. 13], he describes retrospectively what he believes to have been recited under the Vinaya at the First Buddhist Council [*Pañcasatī sarigīṭī*].

Under the heading Mahāvibhaṅga, i.e. the original body of *sikkhāpada*, together with the accompanying explanatory commentarial notes on them, he categorically says that 220 rules or *sikkhāpadāni* which are regulatory injunctions for safeguarding external monastic behaviour of individual monks were gone through [*Evaṃ vīsādhikāni dve sikkhāpada-satāni Mahāvibhaṅgo ' ti kittetvā ṭhapesuṃ*]. The number of *sikkhāpada* is specified as 220 and not 227.

It is to be noted that both P.T.S. edition of the **Sumaṅgalavilāsinī** [of 1886] quoted above and the Simon Hewavitarana Bequest Series of Sri Lanka of 1918 [Vol. I. p. 9] are agreed on the reading we have produced above. **Vipassana Research Institute of India** brings out a new Buddhist Pali Text series. With regard to the passages quoted above, we discover their **Sumangalavilāsinī Vol. I. p. 13** [of 1993], presenting, without any warning, a completely different reading, which is totally at variance with the texts quoted above. In their Devanagari text they read at p. 13 as: *Evaṃ satta-vīsādhikāni dve sikkhāpadasatāni Mahāvibhaṅgo ' ti kittetvā ṭhapesuṃ*.

They add here the word *satta* [= seven] to what we believe is the original



reading *visādhikāni* which means 'plus twenty' to the two hundred. This totals up to 227. Whoever originated this editing, they are perhaps changing the text in order to conform to and corroborate with the widely spread notion of 227 rules, which does not comply with the traditional textual readings which we have already examined above. The editors give no variant readings, nor do they admit of the existence of any differing earlier texts [which we have already shown], and they appear to deliver their text as the last word on the subject.

We also note that the CD ROM of **Chaṭṭa Saṅgāyanā** - Version 3 from Dhammagiri is identically the same with the text we have quoted above from **Vipassanā Research Institute**. They both apparently go back to the **Chaṭṭa Saṅgāyanā** printed Pali Texts of Myanmar. It would be interesting to inquire as to how far this Myanmar tradition of 227 rules go back in history to **pre-Chaṭṭa Saṅgāyanā** times. Neither the P.T.S edition nor the Sri Lankan tradition know anything about such a reading. We would reserve our judgement till we know more about the **pre-Chaṭṭa Saṅgāyanā** texts of Myanmar.

In addition to these *sikkhāpada* of the **Pātimokkha**, seven **Adikaraṇa-samatha dhammā** or regulations describing the correct procedure in **settling judicial matters** of the **Saṅgha** [*adhikaraṇa*] are tagged on to this manual of law.

In the same manner, the Patimokkha of the Bhikkhunis is described in the Sumaṅgalavilāsinī as consisting of 304 rules [*Evaṃ tīni sikkhāpada-satāni cattari ca sikkhāpadāni Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅgo 'ti kittetvā ayaṃ Ubhato-vibhaṅgo nāma ... loc.cit.*]. The Adhikaraṇa-samatha dhammā, it must be remembered, are identically the same in the case of both the monks and the nuns. But these *dhammā* are never listed together with the *sikkhāpada*.

Buddhaghosa is quite specific in referring to this portion of the Vinaya recited at the First Council as **Mahāvibhaṅga** and **Bhikkhunivibhaṅga** and not as **Pātimokkhas**. **Vibhaṅga** means **the analyses of the subject matter that is being dealt with**. Remember that the report of Buddhaghosa is about seven or eight

centuries after the event. This clearly points to the early existence of the Vinaya rules **together with their accompanying details** with regard to the **application and enforcement of the rules** in instances of breach of discipline. Mere rules alone would not have sufficed. But even in the early days of the Sāsana, it was not uncommon to find monks who had opted, for whatever reasons of their own, to learn only the bare rules of the **Pātimokkha** [*Tassa suttañ hi kho āgataṃ hoti no suttavibhaṅgo* Vin. II. 97].

But as far as the function of the Pātimokkha was concerned, it is evident that in the early days of Buddhist monasticism much importance was attached to the meaning and interpretation, and all the implications of the *sikkhāpadas* - not the mere memory of their text. It was also necessary for the proper enforcement of the law that those who were in authority knew all the circumstances leading to the promulgation of the various *sikkhāpadas*. Therefore it is not unusual to find a monk being challenged regarding the authenticity of a particular item of discipline which he wishes to enforce. Thus the maintenance of acceptable good monastic conduct being the live function of the Pātimokkha, it was necessary for a monk, specially for one who was in authority such as a **Vinayadhara** or a **Bhikkhunovādaka**, to **learn both codes of the Pātimokkha** [of both monks and nuns] **in detail** with all the explanations.

Note the significance of the following observation which we discover in the Anguttara Nikāya. " If a **monk is not well-versed in both codes of the Pātimokkha** with all **their details and explanations**, then if he were to be questioned as to where the Buddha has laid down such and such an injunction, he would not be able to give an answer. Then there would be many who would advise him to **first learn his Vinaya** " [*No ce bhikkhave bhikkhuno ubhayāni Pātimokkhāni vitthārena svāgatāni hontī suvibhattāni supavattīni suvinicchitāni suttaso anuvyañjanaso. Idam panāyasmā kattha vuttam bhagavatā ' ti puṭṭho na sampāyati. Tassa bhavanti vattāro ingha tāva āyasmā Vinayam sikkhassū ' ti*] [AN. V. 80 f.] .

Here is the arrangement in seven groups or *satta āpattikkhandha* of the corpus of the **220 sikkhāpada** which make the **Mahāvibhaṅga** or the **Bhikkhu-vibhaṅga**. The arrangement is the same with regard to the **304 sikkhāpada** of the **Bhikkhunī-vibhaṅga**. The number of *sikkhāpada* in each group of the **Bhikkhuni-vibhaṅga** shows a noteworthy increase.

1. Parājikā Bhikkhus 4

Bhikkhunis 8

Inviolable rules which lead to the expulsion of the miscreants from the **Sāsana**. No remedial action is entertained.

2. Saṅghādisesā Bhikkhus 13

Bhikkhunis 17

Two types of punishments are contemplated for this offence.

1. A six-day punishment of **Mānatta** or withdrawal of privileges and prestige is incurred instantly on the commission of the offence.
2. An additional further penalty of **Parivāsa** for each day the offence has been concealed is imposed on the miscreant **to take effect prior to the Mānatta** punishment. [See PARIVĀSA and MĀNATTA].

3. Aniyatā Bhikkhus 2

Bhikkhunis None

These are undetermined with regard to the gravity of the offence - whether it is **Pārājikā, Saṅghādisesa** or **Pācitiya**. [See Vin. IV. 188].

4. Nisaggiyā Pācittiyā Bhikkhus 30

Bhikkhunis 30

These offences require the surrender to the monastic community-pool **of articles illegally kept in possession** in order to be made available to needy ones.

5. Pācittiyā Bhikkhus 92

Bhikkhunis 166

Except confession of guilt, these do not seem to carry any specific punishments.

#### 6. Pāṭidesanīyā Bhikkhus 4

Bhikkhunis 8

These offences require to be announced by the offender [*paṭidesetabbam tena bhikkhunā*], admitting that he has done something censurable [*gārayham āvuso dhammam āpajim asappāyam pāṭidesanīyam* Vin. IV. 176].

#### 7. Sēkhiyā Bhikkhus 75

Bhikkhunis 75

These injunctions deal with propriety of dress, eating habits and behaviour patterns both within the monastic premises and in the households of the lay community. \*

\* For further details, see **Buddhist Monastic Discipline** by Jotiya Dhirasekera [1982], Ph. D. thesis written in 1964 by the present author while he was a layman.



## PĀTIMOKKHA + UDDESA

**Pātimokkhuddesa** [which is made up of the two words Pātimokkha + uddesa] refers to the fortnightly recital of the **Pātimokkha** by the full congregation of senior-status [*upasampanna*] monks, living within one demarkated area of residence or **Sīmā**. The best comprehensive reference to this ceremony occurs in the **Gopakamoggallāna Sutta** [MN. III. 10]. The word **Pātimokkha** in this context means the book of codified rules [*sikkhāpada*] which are 220 in number for the Bhikkhus, together with 7 regulatory principles determining the procedure in settling their legal disputes [*adhikaraṇa + samatha + dhammā*] within the body of

the **Saṅgha**. The Bhikkhunis similarly have 304 rules of their own, together with the same 7 **Adhikaraṇa-samatha-dhammā**.

In the Vinaya Mahāvagga [Vin. I.102] the Buddha is seen announcing that he would sanction his disciples to recite at their regular **Uposatha** meetings the Vinaya rules he has laid down, saying that this would be their **Pātimokkha + recital** [*Yaṃ nūnāhaṃ yāni mayā bhikkhūnaṃ paññattāni sikkhāpadāni tāni nesam pātimokkhuddesaṃ anujāneyyaṃ*]. As these rules also carried the name **sutta**, the recital came to be also called **suttuddesa**. It is as though **what is being recited** gives the recital its distinctive names **pātimokkhuddesa** and **suttuddesa**, both implying one and the same.

The **Gopakamoggallāna** is admittedly a post-parinibbāna sutta. But its importance for a precise study of the ritual of the Pātimokkha recital cannot be over estimated. The sutta says: " The Buddha has laid down for the bhikkhus the regulatory rules [*bhikkhūnaṃ sikkhāpadaṃ paññattam*]. He has also enjoined on them the recital of the **Pātimokkha** [*pātimokkhaṃ uddiṭṭham*]. We who live in a specified village, all of us meet together on the Uposatha day and request the monk who has it [i.e. he who knows the **Pātimokkha** text] to recite it. While it is being recited, whoever monk is guilty of an offence or has committed a transgression, we deal with him [*taṃ kārema*] according to the law [*yathā-dhammaṃ*] and according to the instructions [*yathā-sattham*]. It is not we who punish him. It is the law that does punish him." Note how closely parallel are these two reports of the **Vinaya Mahāvagga** and the **Gopakamoggallāna Sutta**.

We assure you that one could not get anywhere a **more historically accurate** picture of the vibrant **Pātimokkha** ritual than this one in the **Gopakamoggallāna Sutta**. But errors in scholarship are not impossible. It is lamentable that a reputed scholar writing on **Buddhist Sects In India**, as far back as 1970, has completely misunderstood this sutta. Here is what we discover to be a total error in translation. This is how the author renders it.

"There is a treatise called *Pātimokkha* which has been formulated by the omniscient Teacher and which **all the monks living in the same parish (gāmakkhetta) have to recite** in a monastery where they assemble on the *uposatha* days. **Should there occur any difference or doubt in the recitation, the bhikkhus present explain them in accordance with the *dhamma*** (hence they have *dhamma* as their refuge)." [Translation errors are highlighted.] **N.Dutt, Buddhist Sects in India, 1970, p. 43 and p. 40 in 1998 edition.**

This is a **disastrous misunderstanding** of the Pali text quoted, specially in the hands of a reputed scholar. The **resulting errors of interpretation** are extremely misleading. We suggest that the following corrections be noted.

- i. All the monks living in the same parish do not have to recite the *Pātimokkha* on the *uposatha* day. It is not all monks who recite. It is the Reciter [*Pātimokkhuddesakā*] who recites. Others only listen to him attentively and keep track of what is being recited [*Taṃ sādhukaṃ suṇoma manasi karoma.*].
- ii. There is no reference whatsoever to 'there being any difference or doubt in the recitation'. It is the discovery of any offence committed by a bhikkhu in terms of the *sikkhāpada* recited - *tasmiñ ce bhaññamāne hoti bhikkhusa āpatii hoti bhikkhusa vītikkamo.*
- iii. Deriving from his **second wrong assumption above**, the writer makes the following most serious error. He says: "... the bhikkhus present **explain them in accordance with the *dhamma*** (hence they have *dhamma* as their refuge)".

This error betrays a **complete ignorance as to what the function of the Pātimokkha recital was expected to be.** *Yathādhamma* means according to **tradition as already laid down.** That is the *dhamma*. This rendering is supported by the accompanying phrase *yathāsatthaṃ* which means **as instructed.**

It is interesting to note that a study of the subsequent history of the recital shows a complete change in the structure of the ritual and therefore of its

intention. The **original intention to check individually the moral purity of the membership of the congregation** [*yassa siyā āpatti so āvikareyya*. Vin. I. 103] and to **mete out necessary punishment** [*yathādhammaṃ yathāsatthaṃ kārema*. MN. III. 10] as indicated in the **Gopakamoggallāna Sutta** have both left the scene honourably and silently. With the new move towards **Exclusion of guilty monks from the Recital** or *Pātimokkhaṭṭhapana* [Vin.II. 236 ff.], all participants at the recital **are assumed to be acceptably pure** through a formal ritualistic confession [*āpatti desanā*].

It should also be mentioned here in passing that our early Vinaya texts record that the Recitor of the Pātimokkha had to call upon the Saṅgha, before commencing his recital of the Pātimokkha, to announce to the Congregation, **as a preliminary duty** [*pubba-kicca*], the purity of the [absentee] monks [*Kim saṅghassa pubbakiccaṃ. Pārisuddhiṃ āyasmanto ārocetha. Pātimokkhaṃ uddisissāmi*. Vin. I. 102]. This item had to be introduced in this manner for the simple reason that the **Pātimokkha Recital aimed at ensuring the moral rectitude** [uprightness in word and deed] of the entire Buddhist Saṅgha of the region.

This scheme of moral purity verification was carried out on a decentralised regional basis of accepted monastic zones which went by the name of *sīmā*. Therefore even the non-participating [for whatever reason that may be] absentee monks **had to send to the Assembly of the Pātimokkha Recital**, through a carrier, 1. their **assurance of personal purity** [*pārisuddhi*] and 2. their **participatory consent** [*chanda*]. This had to be ascertained and recorded as a prerequisite, prior to the commencement of the Recital. During the Recital [*tasmiñ ce bhaññamane*], those present had to confess their guilt [*yassa siyā āpatti so āvikareyya*]. These references clearly indicate the absolute necessity of **the purity verification of all monks**, both physically present and not present, of the specified zone or *sīmā*.

We have already referred above to the ritualistic trend towards which the

Pātimokkha Recital was drifting in course of time. Saṅgha purity became a matter of mere liturgy [*āpatti-dfesanā*]. This very naturally removed from the scene the **on-the-spot confession** [*yassa siyā āpatti so āvikareyya*]. And equally naturally in the wake of it, the need for punishment. This is what apparently led to the later shift of accent to look upon the fortnightly Uposatha as **a symbol of** or a **unifying factor of the solidarity of the Saṅgha**, of perhaps splintering new blocks of Saṅgha, we imagine [*Uposatho samaggattho visuddhatthā Pavāraṇā*. Vinayavinicchaya p. 90. v. 2599]. We lament.



## PĀRĀJIKĀ [CATTĀRO]

- The four major offences in Buddhist monastic discipline involving Defeat.

In Buddhist monastic discipline, the **Pārājikā** rank among the most serious offences for the senior-status monks, bringing in their wake immediate expulsion from the Order. The word *pārājikā* means **defeat**. That means the catastrophic termination of one's monastic career, when the rest of the community of monks would have nothing to do with the miscreant thereafter [*pārājiko hoti asamvāso*. Vin. III. p. 23]. For he ceases thereby to be a member of the monastic order of Sākyamuni [*Asamaṇo hoti asakyaputtiyo. Tena vuccati pārājiko hofī 'ti*. Ibid. p. 28].

These are four in number. 1. **methuna-dhamma** or sexual relations with a female, even of the animal order [*tiracchānagatāyā 'pi*]. 2. **adinnādāna** or stealthily taking over of what is not given, the value of the stolen article being fixed in conformity with the state law under which a person may be punished for theft. 3. **manussa-viggaha** or manslaughter, together with diverse forms of aiding and abetting suicide, and 4. **uttarī- manussa-dhamma** or false claims to super human spiritual attainments and accomplishments.



Even a cursory glance at these reveals an unmistakable inter-relatedness between the first three of the Pārājikā and what are known to the Buddhists as items of good moral behaviour, namely *sīla*, even of the layman and laywoman in the household. Let us first remind ourselves of these in order. They start with No.1. which deals with **respect for all forms of life**, including that towards animals [*pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*]. Next comes 2. **respect for the right of ownership of possessions of others** [*adinnādānā veramaṇī*]. We have as No.3 **propriety of sex relationships between the genders**.

These deal with **primary areas of human interests and relations**, namely security of one's own life, one's possessions and the process of healthy and wholesome procreation. No disruption of or imbalance in any of these can be entertained, in the life of the householder, without disaster to the totality of the human community. On the other hand, it should be clear to any sensible student of Buddhism, whether he knows it via its original sources in the Pail language or otherwise, that the monastic life [**not priesthood**] in Buddhism is a total and uncompromising departure from and a renunciation of the life in the household. Does it then need much tutoring to educate both Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist students of Buddhism about the vital and integral relationship between these items of down-to-earth moral rectitude of the layman and their legally fortified injunctions in the form of **Pārājikā** in the life of the monk of senior status in the monastic community?

Renunciation or the acceptance of a life of *pabbajjā* implies a total polarized change in life, from one type to another. Like and dislikes, attitudes and aspirations which are customary with the life of the lay community are set aside in pursuit of those of a higher order. Polarization is most pronounced in the area of the convert's [i.e. of the seeker after the Niirvānic goal], attitude to the gratification of the senses. In fact, the basic change in the life of a Buddhist, as against a non-Buddhist, necessarily begins here. That is why, we believe, the second successive stage in the Buddhist Ariyan Path of the **Ariya Aṭṭhaṅgika**

**Magga** introduces first, under its three-fold **re-structured thought patterns** or [*sammā saṅkappa*] a group called *nekkhamma - saṅkappa*. This is made to stand in marked contrast to *kāma - saṅkappa* or **proneness to gratification of sense desires**. *Nekkhamma* here means reduction or elimination of the desire for the gratification of sensory delights. This marks the real beginning of Buddhist religious life. It is in the higher reaches of its spiralling that we become conscious of renunciation in its true spirit.

It needs no superhuman elucidation to show why in the change over from lay life to a monastic way, **eschewal of the desire for sex gratification** gains precedence even over the general respect for life. Even in the destruction of life, as far as the monastic community of *upasampannas* go, monks and nuns, legal requirements seek a division between human and animal life. But the **proneness to sexual gratification** [or indulgence in sexuality = *methuna*] is specifically regarded as challenging or being contradictory to the very spirit of renunciation involved in *pabbajjā*. It defeats its very purpose. So says the **Suttanipāta** in Tissametteyya Sutta at verse No. 815. *Methunaṃ anuyuttassa Metteyyā ' ti Bhagavā. Mussat ' evāpi sāsanam. Micchā ca paṭipajjati. Etaṃ tasmimṃ anāriyaṃ.* This is **the spirit of the Dhamma with regard to the pursuit of Nirvana**. On the other hand, the Vinaya has to play many other tunes and we must know to place each in its correct slot.

It is with considerable dismay that we bring to light a few distorted attempts at assessing or re-assessing the role and relative position of **Pārājikas** in Buddhist monastic life which we have discovered.

This is what Dr. Nagai has to say regarding the first Pārājikā: ' With regard to the problem of inhibitions for priests, one that will remain perplexing for a long time to come is the inhibition concerning sexual relations. To me it appears that the problem of inhibitions for the Buddhist priests of the present day (except those belonging to the Shinshu Sect) depends upon the manner of interpretation

of this particular inhibition. If it is interpreted as one requiring all Buddhist priests to observe celibacy, I fear that very few priests will be found living in Japan who are really worthy of the name bhikkhu.' [*Buddhistic Studies*, ed. B.C.Law, p. 381: Dr. M. Nagai on **Buddhist Vinaya Discipline**.].

Let us carefully examine Dr. Nagai's above statement **If it is interpreted as one requiring all Buddhist priests to observe celibacy...** Does a **lapse of time** and **change of place** justify Japanese Buddhist scholarship of today to interpret Buddhist ecclesiastical law of more than twenty-five centuries ago to suit local conditions of today? Proliferation of Buddhist sub-sects, both in and outside India is readily admitted. But surely not all the fanciful slack habits and the rebellious new patterns of thinking of the dissenting groups need to be fathered on the founder of the original creed. If this is the line of argument, we would only say **The old creed is dead. May the new born ones live long.** \*

In the evaluation of **Pārājikā**, the fourth seems to have confronted Miss. I.B. Horner with some serious difficulty. For she says: " The curious fourth Pārājika, concerned with the offence of 'claiming a state or quality of further-men ' (*uttarimanussadhamma*) seems to have been fashioned in some different mould and to belong to some contrasting realm of values." [I. B. Horner, **Book of the Discipline**, Vol.I.p. xxiv]. This attitude towards the fourth Pārājikā has made her evaluate the four Pārājikas from a new angle. She remarks: " For I think it possible that **the Pārājikas are arranged in an ascending scale of gravity**, in which **the offence held to be the worst morally, though not legally, is placed last** " [Ibid. p. xxv. Emphasis mine.].

We totally disagree with Miss Horner on this. In an attempt to regard the fourth Pārājikā as supremely important in her opinion, it is hardly possible to consider the first Pārājikā as being the least offensive morally. We would regard the first Pārājikā to be undoubtedly the worst, for it runs contrary to the basic teachings of Buddhism whose main theme is *virāga* [detachment], *visamyoga*

[disengagement] etc.

The fourth Pārājikā incidentally happens to be, as we see it, more cautious about a monk's gaining cheap popularity, and thereby winning favours through claims to higher spiritual attainments. To us this sort of behaviour is more peripheral to the spirit of Buddhism than a monk's reckless challenge of his own avowed eschewal of sexual gratification. That is what the Suttanipāta quoted above referred to as **fails in his mission** or *Mussat ' evāpi sāsanaṃ*. \* For further details, see **Buddhist Monastic Discipline** by Jotiya Dhirasekera [1982], pp. 84 ff. Ph. D. thesis written in 1964 by the present author while he was a layman..

Finally, we have one last observation to make about the interpretation of one of the **Pārājikā** which, we believe, is going to be epoch making. It pertains to **Pārājikā No. 3** which deals with *manussaviggaha* or **manslaughter**. Among the many sub-sections discussed under this heading, the **Suttavibhaṅga** under its Pārājika section [Vin. III. p. 82] refers to the story of a monk who, dissatisfied with his monk life, climbed the Gijjhakūṭa mountain and leapt down therefrom [*papātaṃ papatanto*], undoubtedly with the intention of killing himself. He fell upon a man who was making baskets on the ground below [*aññataraṃ vilīvakāraṃ ottharivā māresi*].

During a recent research we undertook on suicide, we discovered to our utter dismay a gross howler in the translation of a sub-section of this **Pārājikā No. 3**. Its Pali reads as follows. *Na ca bhikkhave attānaṃ pātetabbaṃ. Yo pāteyya āpatti dukkaṭassa* [loc. cit.]. We would translate the Pali here as " O monks, you should **not jump off from** [or more literally ' **let yourselves fall off from** ' ] heights. Whoever does so is guilty of a minor offence of wrong-doing or *dukkata* [= dukuḷā àvāt in Sinhala].

The howler in the translation of this Pali text was first discovered by us in the Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti Tripiṭaka Series, Vol. I. [1959] p. 181. The Sri Lankan Sinhala translation given for *attānaṃ pātetabbaṃ* and *Yo pāteyya* is **killing of**

**oneself**, i.e. **suicide** [*ātma ghātanaya* in Sinhala]. Further international research carried out at personal level have revealed that both **Myanmar** and **Cambodia** uphold this same Sri Lankan tradition. We have not been able so far to ascertain the direction of the flow, from which country to which country. On the other hand, it has been our great delight to discover Thailand alone preserving what we firmly believe to be the correct translation of the Pali as we have given above. It reads -

"O monks, you should **not jump off from** [or more literally ' **let yourselves fall off from** ' ] heights. Whoever does so is guilty of a minor offence of wrong-doing [*dukkata*]."

The vital point at issue here is whether the sub-clause of **Pārājikā 3** when it says *Na ca bhikkhave attānaṃ pātetabbam* brings up at all the **question of killing oneself** [*ātma-ghātanaya* in Sinhala, i. e. **suicide**]. **We definitely say NO**. We agree with the Thai tradition which translates *pātetabbam* as meaning only **causes to fall** [= jump off from]. It is no more than the Causative form of the verb *patati* which means falls. One cannot afford to forget that the meaning of **kill** or **destroy** is derived from the root *pat* > *patati* only with the addition of the prefix *ati* - to the Causative base *pāte* - producing the verbal form *pāteteti*, yielding *atipāteteti* which means **kills** as in *yo pāṇaṃ atipāteteti* [Dhp. v. 246]. In the above **Pārājika** context, we maintain that the Vinaya injunction only endeavours **to prevent** such **frivolous and reckless behaviour** like **unguarded jumping off from heights**.

But what of this error in translation? It makes what unmistakably is **an act of suicide** to be only **a minor offence**. In terms of both the Dhamma and the Vinaya **this is unacceptable**. But it has crept into the Vinaya traditions of Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Cambodia. And this error has gone far too long unsuspected.

It is also reasonably clear to us that the Commentarial tradition of Buddhaghosa does not lend any support to the **suicide interpretation** of *attānaṃ pātetabbam* which Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Cambodia have chosen to adopt. The first explicit acceptance of this interpretation in Sri Lanka is witnessed in a

Sri Lankan Vinaya manual in Sinhala by the name of **Sikhavalanda / Sikhavalandavinisa** of about the late Anuradhapura period [i.e. *circa* ninth to the eleventh centuries].

In a chapter named Miscelaneous or *Pakiṇṇaka*, this text includes **two items under suicide**, of **killing oneself** or **getting oneself killed**, and grade them under the minor offence of ***dukkata*** or ***dukulā*** in Sinhala [Sikhavalandavinisa Pradīpaya by Medauyangoda Vimalakitti Thera 1950, p.8 item 48: *tamā marā naṃ maravā nam* and again at p. 79 item 48: *miyaṭi sitin tamā marā naṃ dukulā ve. anun lavā tamā maravā naṃ dukulā ve.*].

But it is clear that Buddhist Ecclesiastical Law in early Vinaya literature does not take into reckoning incidence of suicide. We presume the reason for this is that in case of suicide, the offender being no more existent in the world of the living, there is no possibility of posthumous prosecution or punishment being carried out. Nor is there any real need to contemplate on the same.

We are inclined to believe that this attempt at reducing the gravity of suicide in Buddhist Ecclesiastic law is a post-Commentarial intrusion. Whether this happened through an involuntary misunderstanding of the original Pali text of ***Nāca bhikkhave attānaṃ pātetabbam*** or otherwise, we are not in a position to comment at the moment. But it has come to stay well established in the Sri Lankan Monastic tradition as is evident from the **Sikhavalanda / Sikhavalandavinisa** of about the late Anuradhapura period [i.e. *circa* ninth to the eleventh centuries] which we have quoted above.



## PUNABBHAVA

The Pali word ***punabbhava*** means **coming into existence once again**. It is

essentially a religio-philosophical Buddhist concept. It is made up of *puna* which means **again**, together with *bhava* which means **Samsāric existence**, or **coming into being**. *Bhava* or existence is what all beings inherit [or are entitled to] on account of being caught up in an inextricable [or rather difficult to free oneself from] involvement called **Samsāra** or **cyclical continuance of life from birth to death and to birth and death, again and again**.

This process of *punabbhava* is brought about by each one for himself [in a process of evolution as opposed to creation] by our very process of living in the world and being activated into involvement with it. Through our sense organs like the eye and the ear, we are attracted to lovable things in the world because of our interest in them [*cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā piyarūpe rūpe sārājati*. MN. I. 266] or are repelled from them through our dislikes [*appiyarūpe rūpe byāpajjati* |ibid.]. Through this process of likes and dislikes or *lobha* and *dosa* which leads to involvement through our sensory reactions or *upādāna*, we build up the forces which strengthen the *samsāric* process of repeated births and deaths called *bhava* [*upādāna paccayā bhavo*].

Accepting the principle of causal genesis or *idappaccayatā paṭiccasamuppādo*, the Buddhists look upon *bhava* as a sequential continuous process, personal to each one. We who are in this living process of *bhava* have invested in it through our own involvement in it. This is the **combined process of our sensory awareness** and our **reaction to sensory stimuli** of the world. This harnessing together of our psycho-physical selves or *pañcakkhandha* with the totality of our sensory reactions through it makes the *pañca-upādānakkhandha* of each one **the real generator** of the **samsāric** life process. If this process of *upādāna* ceases at any point of time, then *bhava* also shall cease to grow and shall cease to be [*upādāna-nirodhā bhava-nirodho*].

*Bhava* is a live active self-accumulative process, and it expresses and manifests itself in the form of a new life at the right time through **birth** or *jāti*. Thus

wherever the possibility of a new manifestation in *bhava* is indicated [except in the case of *arahants* who alone can claim that they incur no more new *bhava*], this process of being born into a new life or *punabbhava + abhinibbatti* must take place. In the Chain of Causal Genesis, we cannot concede to the stage *bhava* anything more than **being an active process**. At the right point of time, it does yield a product which invariably is *jāti* or birth.

There is not the slightest doubt that this life regenerative process of *bhava* is set in motion within the life mechanism of a being below the level of an *arahant*. Call it *nāma-rūpa* or *pañcakkhandha* or whatever you will. We believe that this entire psychic process within the human, starting with *vedanā paccayā taṇhā taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṃ upādāna-paccayā bhavo*, cannot be viewed, as the ordinary layman would expect, in terms of length and breadth. It can be viewed only as a source of regenerative power, and that again only by a person possessing superior psychic development. It is such a vision we get in the Samasādaniya Sutta [DN. III.105] where some one endowed with special power sees another's *samvattanika-viññāṇa* [i.e. rebirth regenerative psychic potential], operating between two life phases as this life and the life beyond death [*idhaloke patitthitam paraloke patitthitam*].

It is this possibility of manifestation of *bhava* in a new life form which goes by the name of *punabbhava*. It is the emergence in *samsāra* of a new life form. It is **being born again**, birth being not ended [only *arahants* being able to claim for themselves that they are *khinā jāti*, i.e. those whose birth-process is ended.]. **Call it rebirth or whatever you like**. Do not fail to remember that for this process of birth [or being born or born again] Pali has several related words like *jāti* [from root / *jan - jāyati*], *uppatti* [from *ud + root pad / pajjati = uppajjati*] and *nibbatti* [from *ni + vattati*]. By whatever name one calls it, the fact of samsāric beings being born again and again is admitted.

As far as we can discover, we do not seem to find in early Buddhist



teachings any **sub-species of existence** either within *bhava* or prior to or outside *bhava* who are on the look out for *jāti*. The Pali Commentary to the **Udāna** tells us of certain misdirected thinkers of the day who were speculating on such a sub-species called *antarā-bhava*.

Commentaries in most cases, are reasonably old explanations of textual material which needed further detailed explanations in the interests of the average listener. It is also known that there were texts and textual references which lent themselves to a diversity of interpretations in the hands of interested parties. By the time of the Commentaries, the need to build safeguards against such deflections was also evidently felt.

For such Commentarial rebuttal of an emerging **antarābhava** theory, see the following remarks of the **Commentary to the Udāna**: 'Ye pana ubhayantarenā ' ti padam gahetvā antarābhavam nāma icchanti. Tesam taṃ micchā.

**Antarābhavassa hi bhāvo Abhidhamme paṭikkhitto yeva...** Ye pi ca antarāparinibbāyī sambhavesī ti ca imesam suttapadānaṃ atthaṃ ayoniso gahetvā atthi yeva antarābhavo ' ti vadanti... [**Udāna Aṭṭhakathā**. UdA. PTS. p.92 / SHB. p. 61f.].

The meaning in English of the above quotation from the **Udāna Aṭṭhakathā** would read as: 'As for those who take the word *ubhayantarena* [= between the two] and wish to postulate an *antarābhava*, they are in error [*micchā*]. **They are mistaken.** The existence of an *antarābhava* is **definitely rejected in the Abhidhamma**. Also those who **incorrectly render the meaning of Sutta words** like *antarāparinibbāyī* and *sambhavesī* **say that there is an *antarābhava* ...'** [For their correct rendering see further the Aṭṭhakathā.].

**Udāna Aṭṭhakathā** requests us to consult further the Sub-Commentary to the **Kathāvatthu** of the Abhidhamma Piṭka [**Kathāvatthuppakaraṇa Tikā**] on this examination of *antrābhava* [*Antarābhava-vicāro Kathāvatthupakaraṇassa Tikāya gahetabbo*. Ibid. p. 62]. These observations of Commentator **Dhammapāla**

makes it quite clear that the talk of *antarābhava* was not an issue that went unquestioned and unchallenged in the hands of Theravadins of the Pali tradition from very early times.



## RAINS RETREAT [ VASSĀVĀSA]

The Rains Retreat or Vassāvāsa is a Buddhist religious practice which is essentially connected with the Buddhist Saṅgha, i.e. the monastic community. It is a practice annually undertaken by all Buddhist monks of senior status [i.e. *upasampanna*]. The word *vassāvāsa* [*vassa* + *āvāsa*] literally means 'taking up residence during the rainy season.' Its origin goes back to the time of the Buddha himself. It is interesting to note that its genesis lies, basically in an environmental consideration of tropical India. Seeds of tropical trees and creepers, falling on the ground during the Summer months, took their turn to germinate with the advent of the rains. Like the plant world blooming into life in Spring in the temperate regions, the tropics witness the germination of seeds during the rainy season, announcing the birth of a new generation of plant life. The Indians obviously hailed this with joy and hopeful expectations.

To the Indians, plants constituted *ekindriya-pāṇa* or life with one single life faculty. Indians, as far back as the time of the Vedas, held that the heavens deposited the seed for growth in plants. The Ṛg Veda says that God Parjanya deposits the seed in plants: *Parjanyaḥ reto dadhāti oṣadhīṣu garbhaṃ*. Therefore during the period of seasonal rains, the Indians would be loathe to walk around on land where new seedlings would be suspected to be sprouting into life [... *cārikaṃ carissantī haritāni tiṇāni sammaddantā ekindriyaṃ jīvaṃ viheṭhentā* - Vin.I.137]. They also had a vision regarding the destruction of insect life on the ground [*bahū khuddake pāṇe samghātaṃ āpādentī*. loc.cit.].

Even during the life time of the Buddha, Buddhist monks formed a recognized component of the Indian society. Their behaviour was watched by the Indian community. Rules and regulations governing the behaviour of the monastic community, of both monks and nuns, was one of gradual growth, possibly after a decade or two of the founding of the groups. When monks were seen strutting around during the rainy season, people were alert enough to comment on the impropriety of their behaviour, accusing them of damaging a section of life in the world, as referred to above.

Thereupon the Buddha instructed that monks should, during the rainy season of the year, enter upon a restricted three-month period of rains-residence, commencing from the day after the full moon of the month of July. A concession to this was added, allowing monks to commence this even a month later, doing likewise from the month of August. They shall do so, all monks of senior status taking up this rains-residence, promising to stay in the specified monastery for the duration of the entire period [*Imasmim vihare imaṃ temāsaṃ vassaṃ upemi idha vassaṃ upem*].

They were allowed to temporarily leave the place only for very specified reasons [e.g. of public welfare], and that for a period not longer than six days, promising to return on the seventh day [*sattāha-karaṇīyena*]. In course of time, it has fallen upon the lay community to invite the monks of specific areas to observe the rains retreat, promising to attend to all their needs during this period.

The completion and the conclusion of this three-month period of rains-residence brings us to yet another vital event in the life of the Buddhist monastic community which goes under the name of *pavāraṇā*. This Pali word literally means `invitation to ...' The monks who have lived together the rains-residence of three months shall meet together in full assembly on the full moon day of the concluding third month. At this meeting, a solemn ceremony commences. The senior most among them, shall begin. He shall, seated crouching on the ground,

humbly address the congregation and call upon its membership [*saṅghaṃ bhante pavārem*] to make known any guilt of his they have seen, heard of or suspected about [*diṭṭhena vā sutena vā parisaṅkhāya vā*], undertaking that on seeing it as such, he shall make amends [*passanto paṭikarissām*].

We would hence translate this all important word ***pavāraṇā*** as the **invitation for the pronouncement of guilt**. This solemn ceremony of ***pavāraṇā*** at the conclusion of the three-months ***vassāvāsa***, latterly come to be called the ***mahā pavāraṇā***, is accepted as bringing about the required purge or purification of the senior members the monastic community who have lived together during the ***vassāna***. In the early history of the ***Sāsana*** this process of purification of the saṅgha was expected to take place on a fortnightly basis [*anvaddha-māsaṃ*], i.e. twice every month. This was to be brought about via the Pātimokkha-recital or ***Pātimokkhuḍdesa*** [also called the ***Uposatha***] which was normally meant to be undertaken on a fortnightly basis.

Time, we believe, is an ingenious regulator of both development and deterioration. The ***Sāsana*** is not immune from it. A later Vinaya treatise by the name of Vinaya Vinicchaya declares the ***Uposatha*** which is carried out as a fortnightly event, as contributing to the unity of the Saṅgha, while the ***Pavāraṇā***, which is done annually, brings about its purification [*Uposatho samaggattho visuddhatthā pavāraṇā*]. How alarming it is to be told that purification of the Saṅgha is beginning to be looked upon as an annual event.

Taking into consideration many exigencies of the time, the Buddha also made it possible for the monks, after their rains retreat, to collect material for the preparation of robes [*Anujānāmi bhikkhave vassaṃ vutthānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ kaṭhinam attharituṃ*. Vin.I. 254]. In course of time, it has become the duty of the lay community who invite the monks to observe the rains retreat within a specific monastery to offer to the collective group of monks, i.e. the ***saṅgha***, a single robe or robe material in appreciation of their services. The ***saṅgha*** shall collectively

accept it and via a special act of the *saṅgha*, offer it to any one of their choice. Today, this offering of the *kāthina* robe has become a religious act of inestimable merit accumulation.

Looking upon the Vassāna today as a Buddhist religious observance we would think it makes most sense, no matter in what part of the world it takes place, tropical or temperate, to view it as a period of time, specifically agreed upon by the monks and the lay community, when they can agree upon to contribute towards the mutual enhancement of spirituality of both groups. In spite of the conflicting global value changes in the world today, we do want to believe in the existence of such a concept as spirituality, a bit beyond man's need for his bread and butter and his desire for territorial expansion and empire consolidation.

The Buddhist lay community are traditionally tutored to look upon their clergy as their primary source of religious inspiration which is referred to in our own religious tradition as *anuttaram puññakkhettaṃ lokassa*. Here we are compelled to observe two possible areas of un-doubtable benefit which the Buddhists plan to derive via their religious clergy. We humans have to live on this earth for longer or shorter periods of life, with an incredible wide range of life expectancy. This is in spite of the advances made in the field of medical science. Diseases are not the only source of death for humans.

Accidents and crime, both lamentably in the hands of humans, through calculation and severe neglect, contribute immensely towards them. The humans, with their limited vision, are driven to seek assistance from other non-human sources, both divine and demonic, for protection and safeguard against them. Buddhists today are seen including even the spirits of their dead relatives in this category, both for the protection they can provide and for the worldly prosperity they can offer, directly or indirectly. With the knowledge and experience they possess, we would leave the Buddhist clergy and the lay community everywhere to review this position themselves.

We conceive at the moment of one more area of religious activity which the Buddhists, if they would seriously consider feasible, include within their Vassana season religious activities. On specified days of the season, at least weekly, the two groups could meet in conclave to seriously undertake a study of the Buddha *dhamma* which they piously and regularly venerate without fail when they say *dhammaṃ saraṇam gacchāmi*. Without a true understanding of this *dhamma* and an honest endeavor to practice it perfectly well in one's life [*dhammaṃ sucariṭaṃ care*], neither the monk nor the layman could get anywhere in the direction of their goal of Nirvana. Being good via this method of practice or *paṭipatti* should prove tremendously more profitable than doing good deeds alone, like consuming of instant ready-made foods which is becoming more and fashionable today. This requires more devotion and dedication on the part of both monk and layman.



## SAṄGAHAVATTHU - CATU [cattāri saṅgahavatthūni]

This compound expression which occurs in Buddhist Pali literature refers to the 'four bases wherewith **parents lovingly take care of their children**' [See AN. II.32]. This, we insist, and we also have no doubt that this is the **primary psycho-ethical implication** of this magnanimous injunction promulgated in Buddhism regarding **successful parenting**. It speaks very highly of an indispensable reciprocal relationship of love, respect and mutual esteem which sprouts and grows into admirable luxuriance **between parents and children**.

This guarantees the growth of a hundred percent social solidarity between the younger and the older in the family, i.e. in the smaller unit within the larger one of the community, playing as it were the role of a lynch pin which keeps a wheel from flying off a speeding vehicle [*rathass' āṇī' va yāyato*. Ibid.]. That the filial love of children indisputably flow in the direction of parents is firmly stressed

in the text with a double negative statement ` that no mother nor father would ever receive any respect or honor due from their children in the absence of this basic parental love towards them '[*ete ca saṅgahā nāssu na mātā putta-kāraṇā labhetha māṇaṃ pūjaṃ vā na pitā putta-kāraṇā*. Ibid.].

Elsewhere in the Anguttara Nikaya [AN. IV. 219f. & 364], these fourfold **virtues of parental care** of children are transferred to a completely new area of **congregation management** by community leaders [...*imaṃ mahatiṃ parisam saṅgaṇhāsi*]. We shall take it up for examination in due course.

Ranking first in these fourfold parental obligations towards their children is the provision by parents of the **children's need for food and clothing** [*dānaṃ*]. This on the part of parents is indeed the basis for the growth of mutual love. Closely associated with this is **the availability of loving gentle words** or *peyya-vajja* from parents towards their offspring. These items 1 and 2 are by no means interchangeable commodities in the life in the home.

Coming third in the list is **'welfare guidance'** or *attha-cariyā* which is none other than **counselling** of the younger which is very much needed by the children when they should be growing up in the home **under the care of the older**, i.e. the parents, with their irreplaceable **leadership maturity**. It is for this reason that Buddhist teachings refer to parents as **the first teachers** in the home [*pubbācariyā ' ti vuccare* at AN. I. 132].

Finally comes *samānattatā* which is delicately viewed as the emotional mobility of parents towards their children, i.e. the ability of parents to handle and share the grieves and joys of their children, moving up and down with admirable stability, as and when the need arises. This role of the mother and the father is looked upon as an indispensable stabilizer in the emotional life of the growing up children in the home.

Within this same text of the Anguttara Nikaya, we witness a very strange

change in the sense of direction in the presentation of what we refer to here as **high-value ethics of parenting**. **Child-care** and **growth of love in the home** is no more the concern in the new presentation. The older theme is seen changing hands with **congregation and community management**. Likewise, **group-leader training** and **mastery over the crowd** seems to engage priority of attention. This is exactly what our new Anguttara reference does.

"O Hatthaka, your assembly [parisā] is large. How do you handle with success [saṅgaṇhāsi] this large group? [Mahatī kho tyāyaṃ Hatthaka parisā. **Katham** pana tvaṃ Hatthaka **imam mahatim parisam saṅgaṇhāsī** ti. AN. IV. 219].

Etadaggaṇḍapāli of the Anguttara Nikaya [AN. I. 26] honours Hatthaka Āḷavaka as the foremost among those who had perfect command over assemblies of people through the fourfold tactful handling of them [*catūhi saṅgaha-vatthūhi parisam saṅgaṇhantānaṃ yadidaṃ* Hatthako Āḷavako].

This new concept of **congregation management** which is here mysteriously associated with the earlier one of *saṅgaha-vatthūni* as the basis of **successful parenting**, makes the earlier concept lamentably dysfunctional. At AN. II. 220, holding Hatthaka Āḷavaka as the model controller of congregations via the *saṅgaha-vatthu*, it is said that he possesses eight wondrous religio-ethical virtues [*abbhutehi acchariyehi dhammehi*] which qualify him, as it were, for this position. They are that he has religious trust [*saddhā*], moral virtue [*sīla*], sense of shame [*hiri*], religious sense of fear [*ottappa*], much learning [*bahussuta*], generosity [*cāgavā*], wisdom [*paññavā*], and frugality [*appiccho*]. This statement is ascribed to the Buddha himself. No endeavor seems to be made anywhere to relate these to the *saṅgaha-vatthūni* as parental virtues, either as preceding them or following them.

We make no attempt here to determine the relative early or lateness in Buddhism of these tools of social correction. Buddhism's primary venue of social regulation is undoubtedly the home. Society is viewed as being built out of it or



upon it. For this reason, we give to parenting in Buddhism a priority well over social regulation.

At AN. I. 32 where these *saṅgaha-vatthu* are upheld **as virtues of successful parenting**, it is said that the world holds them in high esteem [*Yasmā ca saṅgahā ete samavekkhanti paṇḍitā tasmā mahattam papponti pāsamsā ca bhavanti te.*]



## VINAYA

This Encyclopaedia article on Buddhist Vinaya is not meant to be a complete history of Vinaya literature of any school of Buddhism, neither Theravada nor Mahayana. We shall give below a modest bibliography of writings on Theravada Buddhist Vinaya in Pali. Our main interest in this article shall be twofold. We shall first deal with the genesis of the body of literature that has, through a considerable period of time, come to be finally established as the main body of the Vinaya. We look upon this process as a purposeful creation and as being organic in its evolution. We work via literary evidence found embedded in Canonical Pali texts themselves [*tantim ārūḥhā*] like the record of the First Buddhist Council or Pañca-satī Sangīti [Vin. II. 287].

Our second interest in this article is to emphasize that the roots of the Vinaya are to be primarily traced in the Dhamma whose one and only concern is the fulfilment of the life of *brahma-cariya* for the final attainment of Nirvana. The two statements *dhammaṃ deseti* and *brahma-cariyaṃ pakāseti* in the Buddhist texts always go inseparably hand in hand. The Vinaya must necessarily uphold the ideals of the dhamma and essentially contribute to their fulfilment. It has to be soon discovered that one of the primary aims of establishing the Vinaya, in the wake of the *dhamma*, was for that purpose.

Any study about Buddhism must necessarily commence with a sense of historical genesis. When and where and for whose sake did such a system of thinking which goes under the name of Buddhism originate? What prompted its genesis and in whose hands did it see its development? Over the years, what has been the pattern of its development etc. etc.? These are relevant questions to face and to be answered with diligence and detachment. This early message which Śākyamuni, the Buddha Gautama, is believed to have delivered to the world in the sixth century B.C. is what primarily goes under the name dhamma [Sanskrit dharma]. It essentially carries within it the concept of brahma-cariya referred to as the totally pure and totally complete religious life [*kevala-paripuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ brahma-cariyaṃ pakāseti* - DN. I. 62] which leads man out of the painful cyclical continuance in saṃsāra into his final liberation in Nirvana. It is on hearing this dhamma [taṃ dhammaṃ sutvā] that the religiously more mature people [*saddhā-paṭilābhena samannāgato*], both men and women, give up their household life and take to a totally new and different life of renunciation or *pabbajjā*.

As the years rolled on [and this is believed to be nearly from twelve to twenty years], the extension and expansion of this monastic institution called the Sangha also began to witness signs of decay and decadence. This necessitated the establishment of a codified legal disciplinary system called the Vinaya. The Vinaya, primarily is the legal machinery in Buddhism whereby the discipline of the monastic community, i.e. of the men and women who have chosen to renounce their life in the world, is established and maintained. Within it, are contained two areas called

1. the Vibhanga of the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhuniṣ [i.e. Pārājika and Pācittiya Pāli as separate books] or legal enactments pertaining to the moral life, i.e. behaviour in word and deed, of its membership, and
2. the Khandhakas which deal with instructions regarding admission of

members into the order. i.e. pabbajjā and their higher ordination or upasampadā, relationship of pupils to teachers etc. etc.

Of these two divisions of books, the Vibhanga contain within them the 220 rules or *sikkhā-pada* for the monks and the 304 for the nuns, together with commentarial, i.e. subject matter explanations and grammatical notes on them. These two sets of rules are severally called the Pātimokkhas, i.e. Bhikkhu Pātimokkha and the Bhikkhūṇī Pātimokkha. With subject-matter comments and grammatical notes added to the two Patimokkhas, they assume within themselves a commentarial form and acquire the new names Bhikkhu-vibhanga and Bhikkhūṇī-vibhanga.

Completing the entire legal machinery of the Pātimokkha, seven statutes are further added which are common to both groups of monks and nuns, for the settlement of ecclesiastical disputes or *adhikaraṇa*. These seven are specifically called *satta adhikaraṇa-samatha-dhammā*. They are never referred to as *sikkhāpada*. Nor are they totalled up with them. They stand apart [220 + 07 under Bhikkhus and 304 + 07 under Bhikkhūṇis]. These have built-in authority to prosecute and punish miscreants against offences of breach by those who violate or challenge this legal set-up.

The second and the other complementary group under the early Buddhist Vinaya is the Khandhakas [i.e. the Mahāvagga Pāli and Cullavagga Pāli] or instructions relating to admission of new members to the order, their inter personal relationships like teacher and pupil within the corporate body called the Sangha, monastic rituals like the observance of the Rains Retreat [*vassā-vāsa*] and the care and maintenance of their harmoniously owned joint-property like buildings, furniture etc. It would be reasonable to assume that even in the earliest phase of the Sāsana, i.e. about the time of the First Buddhist Council, these two groups, the Vibhanga and the Khandhaka, which went under the name of ubhato vinaya, (see note) had to stand together side by side, even though the latter could

not have been in a very advanced state of development.

The Dhamma, as against the Vinaya, constitutes the basic teachings of Buddhism which deal essentially with the predicament of the humans in the world [*Kicchaṃ vatā'yaṃ loko āpanno jāyati ca jiyati ca mīyati ca cavati ca uppajjati ca*. SN. II.10]. It sums up the phenomenon of life as a ceaseless process of individual continuance [*mīyati ca cavati uppajjati*] ca as well as [*sandhāvati samsarati*], of being born, of going through growth and decay, of being subject to disease and death in the process and continuing to be born again and again until man himself brings about the cessation of the process. This entire process is what is referred to in Buddhism as *samsāra*.

Opposed to this is the one and only goal of Buddhism, i.e. the cessation [*nir + vṛti* or *nirodha*] of this *dukkha*-generating birth and death process of life which the Buddha discovered.

The Buddha himself has declared that this was what he was indicating to mankind as the mission of his life. This, he proclaimed to his disciples all the time, saying: *pubbe c'āham bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhañ ca paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ* [in the Alagaddūpama Sutta at MN. I.140]. There is absolutely no ambiguity or vagueness about the direction of this spiritual movement of Buddhism. There is nothing of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas in Heavenly worlds who will work for the salvation of mankind. Thus the Buddhist religious goal of Nirvana always carries the unmistakable title End of Suffering or *dukkhassa anta* and *dukkha-nirodha*, worked out by each one for himself.

The Buddhist suttas repeatedly carry the statement that the good householder who is endowed with adequate trusting-capacity [*saddho kulaputto*] realises, on hearing the words of the Buddha, that it is not easy to live the perfect religious life while living the life of a householder [*na idaṃ sukaraṃ ekanta-paripuṇṇaṃ ekanta-parisuddhaṃ sankhalikhitaṃ brahma-cariyaṃ carituṃ agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā...* DN. I. 63]. All these statements which come to us from the

Sāmaññaphala Sutta clearly reveal that the Buddhist goal of final release in Nirvana is invariably tied up with total renunciation of the life of the householder [*agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti*]. Thus it necessarily follows that all basic and fundamental teachings of Buddhism must undertake, as a priority, the grooming of the disciple in his monastic career. The Buddha is seen seriously accepting this position when he calls upon his disciples to be acceptably good bhikkhus [*suvacā bhavissāmā' ti evam hi vo bhikkhave sikkhitabbaṃ*], respecting the dhamma and accepting the dhamma as the norm [*dhammaṃ sakkaronto dhammaṃ garukaronto dhammaṃ apacāyamānā* MN I 126]. Even though not with historical precision, it is believed that the early years of the Buddha's monastic organisation [up to about twelve years from its foundation] saw this harmonious growth of the spiritual culture of its membership.

But with the extension and expansion through time and space, and the increase in numbers of those who joined the monastic community, the personal discipline of the Buddhist Sangha began to show signs of decadence and decline. The Bhaddāli Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya [at MN. I. 445] specifies five deteriorating conditions within the Sangha which necessitates the laying down of the codified system of legalised discipline [*Yato ca kho Bhaddāli idh'ekacce āsavaṭṭhāniyā dhammā sanghe pātubhavanti atha satthā sāvakanāṃ sikkhāpadam paññāpeti tesam yeve āsavaṭṭhāniyānaṃ dhammānaṃ paṭighātāya*]. Among these conditions are the increase in personal gains [*lābhagga-mahatta*], the wide-spread extension of renown and reputation [*yasagga-mahatta*] and the increasing strength in numbers [*vepulla-mahatta*] which necessitated the formulation of a codified system of discipline or sikkhāpadāni for the regulation of monastic discipline.

Above all these, the over-all message of Buddhism that renunciation or nekkhamma was the basic start of all spiritual aspirations in Buddhism as unhesitatingly stated in the Dhammacakka-ppavattana Sutta, in its detailing out of the Eightfold Path, was not reaching those who were too readily turning in the

direction of pabbajjā or monastic life. Even in the early days of Buddhism, meet a monk by the name of Sudinna who, on going home to his mother, was blamed for leaving his household life and becoming a monk, without even leaving behind an offspring to inherit their ancestral property. The awareness of the message of Buddhism as a Buddhist disciple by this monk was so meagre and his ignorance so overwhelming that he agreed, and while being a monk, had sexual intercourse with his former wife and gave her a child during that encounter.

Even at a time prior to the establishment of the legalised codified Vinaya as an instrument of prosecution and punishment. it is important to note here how this erring monk Sudinna felt after committing what he himself felt to be an offensive breach of monastic propriety. Remorse overtook him. He admits that he has committed an evil deed: *atthi me pāpaṃ kammaṃ kataṃ*. He laments that he had not been able to live the perfect holy life: *nā'sakkhiṃ yāvajīvaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ parisuddhaṃ brahmacariyaṃ caritun'ti* [all at Vin. III.19]. What is fundamental to the perfection of the spiritual life in Buddhism is this sense of personal guilt in the violation of the prescribed detachment in the life of brahmacariya. Long before the establishment of a legalised Vinaya, it is this norm of detachment propounded in the *dhamma* [virāgāya visamyogāya dhamme desiyamāne] that Sudinna's fellow celibates place before him to pin point his incongruous behaviour of yielding to sexual attraction [*sarāgāya cetessasi*].

The Buddha, having indicated the unfavourable conditions which were seen emerging among the membership of the monastic community, and having stressed the need to lay down a codified system of legalised discipline, containing within it unquestionable authority for prosecution and punishment, by the members of the monastic community themselves, pointed out ten beneficial results [dasa atthavase] which would come about as a result of this proposed legalised maintenance of discipline.

The first two among them, 1. *Sangha-suṭṭhātāya* and 2. *Sangha-phāsutāya*,

concern themselves with the comfort and convenience of those who have taken upon themselves the monastic life, to be free from irritations and annoyance that would come from miscreant fellow-members. No. 3. *Dummankūnaṃ puggalānaṃ niggaḥāya*: for the arrest and elimination of miscreants within the Sangha. 4. *Pesalānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ phāsu-vihārāya*: for the ease and comfort of well-disciplined monks. 5 and 6 take up the prevention and elimination of defiling traits of character or āsavas which damage the religio-spiritual life, both of this life [*diṭṭhadhammikānaṃ*] and of the life beyond death [*samparāyikānaṃ*]. 7 and 8 endeavour for the generation of faith in those not already converted and for the promotion and enhancement of the faith of those already converted [*appasannānaṃ pasādāya pasannānaṃ vā bhiiyo-bhāvāya*]. 9 and 10 promote the stability and continuance of the good Dhamma and the furtherance of the good Discipline [*saddhammaṭṭhitiyā vinayānuggahāya*].

We have already indicated the vital role which the dhamma which the Buddha was delivering to the world was expected to play in regulating and reforming the life of the human towards elevating him on the path of his spiritual ascent [*dhammaṃ sakkarontā ... suvacā bhavissāmā' ti evaṃ hi vo bhikkhave sikkhitabbam* MN I 126]. But it soon began to be clear that owing to the time space expansion of the monastic community and the lack of competent authority and powerful leadership within, situations of serious breakdown of the monastic discipline were becoming events of too frequent occurrence. Thus the powerful machinery of the Vinaya, to serve the ten useful services indicated above [*dasa atthavase*], came to be established.

Tracing back the genesis of the codified Vinaya of the Patimokkha to its basic primary source, the original *dhamma* with which the Buddha started his religio-cultural mission, we already discover it under the basic Buddhist concept of moral goodness of man, contained under the broadest concept called *sīla*. In Buddhism, the goal of its religious aspiration is to be achieved through a carefully worked out process of religio-spiritual culture which is referred to as *sikkhā* which

basically means culture, training and discipline. From the earliest Buddhist teachings we discover *sikkhā* to be a co-ordinated three-tiered process of growth and development the primary grounding of which is moral goodness or *sīla*.

*Sīla* is the primary man-to-man relationship of respectful friendship. It begins with the over all respect for all forms of life on earth [as well as extra-terrestrial], of man and animal equally well. Respect for man's possessions, the basis of his sustenance comes second. This is immediately followed by respect for gender difference, spontaneously recognised as the biological basis of life continuity of man and animal. Underlying all these is honesty at every stage in one's life. Winding up the injunctions of the *Pañca-sīla* comes the fifth precept which insists that man shall always safeguard and not lose his sanity of judgement while being engaged in work [not be *visaññī* assa] by the intake of alcohol and drugs [yam pivitvā]. It is amusing to note the sly manner in which the mechanics who ingeniously construct of *Ājīvatṭhamaka Sīla* pack this item No. 5 of *Pañca-sīla* under *kāmesu micchā-cārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ*, reflecting a disastrous ignorance and misunderstanding of this basic injunction which stands to safeguard against sexual improprieties in human society.

All these items are contained within the primary *sīla* group called the *pañca-sīla*. These *sīlas* are, in the Buddhist world, no more than self-opted patterns of good moral behaviour of the lay house-holder, not enforced by any external authority, applicable to all mankind, irrespective of caste creed differences of any land anywhere. At any rate, Buddhism holds any breaches of these at social level to be reprehensible [dussīlo iti vuccati at AN. III. 205. See also Dh. v. 247]. In a non-Buddhist world of the Universal Monarch or *Rājā Cakkavatti* who is held out to be an emblem of moral goodness [*dhammiko dhamma-rājā*] this moral goodness appears to have been expected to be legally enforced: [*pāṇo na hantabbo adinnaṃ na ādātābbam* DN II 173, II 62] etc. It is extremely interesting to note that Buddhism does not tie up its concept of moral goodness of a people with their political ideology and their forms of government. This freedom is



granted to the rulers with the words "carry on your governments as you have done so far = *Yathā-bhuttañ ca bhujjatha* [ibid]."

It is to be noted by every serious student of Theravada Buddhism that in the teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha Gotama all lay aspirants to the goal of Nirvana in Buddhism have to initially go through two successive stages of religio-cultural development of *sīla*. *Sīla* is the very first category of the three-tiered system of *sikkhā* [tisso sikkhā] which consists of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. The two grades of *sīla* at the primary stage are 1. the self-opted *pañca-sīla* for continuous life-long [yāva-jīva] observance which is calculated to bring about global harmony everywhere, and eliminate evil forms of behaviour among mankind.

This, we note, is being more and more appreciated in the world today, both in the east and the west. Respect for all life of man and animal, including bird and beast is rapidly gaining ground among a vast majority of more humane people, and the saner religions of the world are now accepting the swing in this direction. Strict discipline over the consumption of alcohol and drugs, while being publicly engaged in work [*majja-pamādaṭṭhāna*] is being enforced everywhere in the world at state level, implementing it with adequate prosecution and punishment. Honesty in all areas of social activity is rapidly gaining ground as an indispensable social ingredient, accompanied by prompt and expeditious prosecution and adequate deterrent punishment. Woman as the female, being primarily accepted as the progenitor of the species, even as today's surrogate mothers at times, has come to deserve un-stinted respect and recognition in the cultured societies of the world.

Moving over from a basically relevant social area of 1. *pañca-sīla* to a specifically Buddhist religio-spiritual territory of human culture, we come to the second area in No. 2. *aṭṭhanga uposatha sīla*. The *pañca-sīla*, as a life-long practice of all good humans can contribute to the happiness and well-being of mankind, any where and everywhere, without any sharp caste creed differences.

The sīla items 1 and 2 of the *pañca-sīla*, in particular, viz. the respect for individual life and respect for justifiably acquired personal property of every one, have in Buddhism, ante-dated today's Fundamental Human Rights by more than twenty-five centuries. On the other hand, the *aṭṭhanga-uposatha-sīla* is a periodical observance to be undertaken by the lay house-holders on the four specific days of the uposatha in the lunar calendar, to be observed during a complete period of day and night [*imañ ca divasaṃ imañ ca rattim*], i.e. twenty-four hours. This is unmistakably indicated in the Buddhist texts as follows.

*Catuddasī pannarasī yāva pakkhassa aṭṭhamī  
pāṭihāriya-pakkhañ ca aṭṭhanga-susamāhitam  
uposatham upavaseyya yo pi'ssa mādiso naro.*

A.N. I. 144

On the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month  
and on the two eighth days of each half month  
and on an extra-observance day,  
whoever wishes to be like me,  
let him observe the well-arranged  
eight-fold uposatha.

Translated by the author

The scope and stature of the higher-grade sīla of the *aṭṭhanga-uposatha* in the Theravada tradition has to be understood, without any confusion or vague uncertainty, both by the givers as well as the takers of these precepts. In the first instance, the precepts of the *pañca-sīla* in Buddhism are presented to mankind in an exceedingly broad-based manner to be acceptable to all humans on earth without sectarian undertones of any clan or tribal nature. Today, their global acceptability is being appreciated more and more. The world-wide or more or less global interest today to legally prevent humans from being engaged in physical activity while they are disabled and incapacitated physically and mentally under the influence of alcohol, is an issue of international importance in terms of world culture. So is the attitude towards theft or deprivation of others of

their justifiably acquired possessions for the simple reason that property and possessions are the basis of human subsistence.

On the other hand, the *aṭṭhanga-uposatha-sīla* must necessarily be noted as indicating the most logical commencement of the religio-spiritual cultural ascent of the lay householder. The unquestionable traditional version of the aṭṭhanga-sīla observance is that it is only on specified days of the moon as indicated by the very word uposatha and is never meant to be life-long (see note). Make no mistake about it. While continuing to live his or her regular household life, a layman or lay woman picks out any single one of the four days indicated in the lunar calendar as uposatha, i.e. the full-moon, new-moon and the two quarters of the waning and waxing moons [*cāṭuddasīpannarasīyāva pakkhassa aṭṭhamī uposathaṃ upavaseyya* at AN. I. 144], and that for observance during a full twenty-four hour day [*imañ ca divasaṃ imañ ca rattiṃ*].

This includes the keeping of four additional precepts of abstinence [*veramaṇī sikkhāpadam*], i.e. three additional to the *pañca-sīla*, together with the third precept of *kāmesu micchā-cārā* or chastity being elevated to one of complete celibacy on that specified day. Together with this, the other three precepts of the *aṭṭhanga-uposatha*, which are additional to the *pañca-sīla*, mark self-opted abstinences on those specific days, indicating the direction of the path on which the Buddhist disciple is expected to proceed in his quest of the goal of Nirvana. They eloquently pronounce the spirit of *nekkhamma* or renunciation, while being householders, in the periodic suspension of gratification of sex [*abrahmacariyā veramaṇī*], unrestricted and irregular intake of food [*rattūparato + vikāla-bhojanā veramaṇī*] and enjoyment of music etc. [*nacca-gīta-vādita*] and personal beautification [*maṇḍana-vibhūsanatṭhānā veramaṇī*].

This change, even though temporarily restricted time-wise, has to be acquired with acceptable regularity, if the Buddhist wish for Nirvana has to be a genuine and honest aspiration. Here we take *nekkhamma-saṅkappa* or the re-

structured thought pattern of renunciation, contained within the category *sammā - saṅkappa* of the Noble Eightfold Path, at its very early, second stage of graduated development [*sammā-ditṭhissa sammā saṅkappa pahoti* at DN. II. 216 f.], as indicating the correct direction of development in the liberation process leading to Nirvana. Underlying this has to be a genuine spirit of discipline, of an awareness of the need to renounce or let go, at least in gradual stages, one's involvement with sensuality or sensory gratification, starting with sexual desires of *kāmesu micchācārā* to total celibacy in *abrahma-cariyā veramaṇī*.

More and more philosophers of the western world are now seen to be putting forward this idea of 'delay gratification' for the purpose of religio-cultural growth of man on earth [or this may even be referred to as socio-cultural growth of man]. This line of homogeneous development of man everywhere by no means brings in its wake the collectivist virally infective idea of religious expansionism, invariably followed by world domination. This is self-improvement of man for its own sake. This, more than any form of prayer and supplication, or grace from any source outside, contributes towards the elevation of the human self in a transcendental way. This is the original spirit of the *dhamma* which Śākyamuni, the Buddha Gotama gave to the world for transcendence to a plane above it, free from all the psycho-physical trouble and turmoil within it. And it is for this reason alone, and not for any heaven-relatedness that it came to be called transcendental or *lokuttara*. There can be no cheating about it, with bliss in the heavenly and human worlds beyond death. This cannot, at least be so within the claimed-to-be original Theravada Buddhist tradition, neither by those who claim to be exponents of it nor by those who accept it with acclamation and approval.

Thus it becomes adequately clear that the monolithic religious life of *pabbajjā* in Buddhism begins with this unquestionable act of renunciation or *nekkhamma*, of totally leaving behind all encumbrances, physical and mental, of household living, in search of homelessness [*agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti*]. This is and

has to be found within the unblemished Theravada tradition, as the one and only life style possible for a pursuant of Nirvana or the liberation from *samsāric* ills. The honesty entailed in this quest of Nirvana by the Buddhist requires a firmness of conviction with regard to self-awareness and self-discipline. Has a Buddhist acquired the awareness why he or she needs to aspire for Nirvana and what preliminary steps he or she needs to take in the direction of its achievement. This is why one who has taken to a monastic life through renunciation, man or woman, immediately reminds himself or herself, on the emergence of any thoughts of abandoning it, that it virtually amounts to suicide. Read the story of Bhikkhuṇī Sīhā at Therīgāthā verse 80 for her firm conviction [*varam me idha ubbandham yañ ca hīnam punācare* = It is better for me to hang my self here than return to lay life]. A very similar story is told about Bhikkhu Sappaddāsa at Theragāthā v. 407.

In the passage from lay life to one of *pabbajjā*, the pattern of growth of the monastic religious culture in Buddhism is clearly indicated in the *dhamma*, i.e. in the suttas themselves. Note that it is pre-Vinaya, i.e. prior to the codified monastic legal system, in origin. A sutta by the name of Fruits of Recluseship or Sāmaññaphala Sutta in the Dīgha Nikaya [at DN.I. 62-86] details out in three sections as minor, medium and large, all items of abstinences or *sīla* which bring about propriety of monastic behaviour, each item being referred to as serving this need: *idam pi'ssa hoti sīlasmim*.

All these items of morality regulation via *sīla*, a Buddhist monastic is expected to take upon himself for the perfection of his religious life, in pursuit of his aspired goal of Nirvana. Out of this vast body of precepts called *sīla* which are meant for the development of moral goodness in the land and in the religio-spiritual culture within the institution of Buddhism itself, two groups of five precepts [*pañca-sīla*] and eight precepts [*aṭṭhanga-uposatha-sīla*] are extracted for the purpose of regulating the religious life of the lay community. The five precepts are meant to be life-long, while the eight precepts are self-opted

periodic observances on specific days of the month. The Anguttara Nikaya [at AN. I. 144] specifies these as the 14th, 15th and the two eighths. Grading the *aṭṭhanga-uposatha-sīla* as a life-long observance, i.e. *āpāṇa-koṭika* or *yāva-jīva-sīla* is a tragic error of judgement with very serious consequences [See Hammalawa Saddhātissa's Buddhist Ethics p.80]. In the case of *pañca-sīla*, the evil consequences of any breaches in them are clearly indicated, both in terms of this life [Dhp. v. 247 & AN. III. 205] and the life after. But they involve no legal prosecution via the religious institution. But in the world today, both cultured societies and their state laws seems to take a realistic serious view of some of these, as is indicated by legal detection via breathalyser testing for drunkenness.

The early Buddhist monastic community was founded by the great Master Samaṇa Gotama, in the sixth century B.C. soon after his enlightenment as the Buddha. This body of mendicants went under the name of Bhikkhu Sangha because of their regular habit of begging from the lay community for their subsistence of food and clothing. They were necessarily dependent on others [*parapaṭibaddhā*]. These mendicants increased in numbers, and forming themselves into groups, seem to have spread out with ease and considerable success over the neighbouring regions [*tāsu tāsu disāsu tesu tesu janapadesu*]. Their very physical appearance, expressing a remarkable degree of abstemiousness and renunciation, with their clean shaven heads and simple wearing apparel of a monochrome dyed-robe [*kāsāya-vattha* / not yellow by any means], made up of hand-picked pieces of abandoned cloth of diverse sorts and colours from charnel grounds [*paṃsu-kūla-cīvara*], naturally made them the centre of a great deal of public charity.

On his wanderings, whenever and wherever the Buddha as the founder of this new group arrived in a new locality, people of all ranks in ceaseless numbers seem to have flocked to see him with a very keen desire to acquaint themselves with what he had to say. In no uncertain terms, he was gaining in popularity. This also led to the tremendous patronage the community of disciples received. As for

the disciples, this gain and increase in popularity with people [*lābhagga* and *yasagga*] increasingly contributed to slackness in monastic behaviour and breakdown of monastic discipline. The Bhaddāli sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya precisely refer to this situation as the arrival into the midst of the community signs of decadence and decay [*āsavaṭṭhāniyā dhammā sanghe pātu bhavanti*. MN. I. 445].

*Sīla* as items of self-opted personal discipline for spiritual growth, contained within the first division of the three-tiered *sikkhā*, without any accompanying machinery for prosecution and punishment of miscreants had to be given new legal validity by being re-drafted within a legal frame-work. Items of *sīla* had to be re-selected on the basis their organic relevance for the furtherance of the spiritual growth of the monastic life of the Buddhist disciple as well as for his harmonious blending with the lay society and the state. New sets of rules, graded according to the severity of their resulting breaches like killing, stealing and sexual improprieties in terms of religious and social considerations had to be introduced. This was vital in the implementation of the areas of prosecution and punishment which is the primary domain of the Vinaya.

In Buddhism, respect for all life heads the items of moral goodness, coming foremost under items of *sīla* as *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*. In fact, it is the first precept under the *sīlas*. For the lay householders, it comes, like all other items of *sīla*, no more than as a moral injunction, with no threats of prosecution and punishment. Under State law, however, man slaughter as a segment of destruction of life becomes a more serious offence. Different societies deal with it differently. Under Buddhist ethics of religious living, for both groups of monks and laymen, destruction of life comes to be equally offensive. But from the time Buddhist monastic discipline comes under the category of codified law or Vinaya, determination of prosecution and punishability of monastic offenders on this count had to be carefully handled. This had to be particularly so because the Buddha in no way wanted his monastic institution of the Sangha to run into

conflict with the State. We shall examine this with a few examples. Both with the Jains and the Buddhists respect for all life had become a primary injunction as *ahimsā paramo dharmah*. But in bringing killing as a punishable offence, acceptable in the eyes of state law, the Buddha saw the need to insist on the difference between the destruction of human life and animal life.

Under the codified law in Buddhism which goes under the name of Pātimokkha, the first group of Pārājikā rules constitute the four most serious monastic offences which imply immediate expulsion from the community of monastic living on the discovery of commission of any of those offences [*pārājiko hoti asamvāso*]. As the equivalent of the very first item of *pāñātipātā* under the *sīla* division, the Pātimokkha listing of Pārājikas has *manussa-viggaha* or man-slaughter placed as item no.3 of the group. Heading the list of rules of this group as no.1 comes the offence of sexual indulgence or *methuna-dhamma*. In the higher grade Buddhist religious living of a *pabbajita* or renunciant, in consonance with the spirit of its teachings, *nekkhamma* had to take precedence over all others. Hence this priority given to abstinence from sexual indulgence, in the Pātimokkha listing, as against even destruction of life, had to be understandably so.

That this *nekkhamma*, even in the life of the of the layman, had to be ultimately directed towards something much higher, even seasonally for a period of twenty-four hours, than the mere reduction or rejection of sensual pleasures becomes adequately clear in the periodic observance of the *aṭṭhanga sīla* as a *uposatha sīla* where the 3rd precept which reads as *kāmesu micchācārā* and means no more than chaste sex is completely changed to one of complete celibacy as *abrahmacariyā veramaṇī*. For the simplest and the most direct introduction to the concept of *kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī* in Buddhism which is fully in consonance with the written word of the *dhamma* and is not tagged on to any fanciful imagination of interpreters of the *dhamma*, read Dammapada verse no. 247 where, while speaking of the role of *pañca-sīla* in human society,



this unlawful search for gratification of (sexual) pleasure is equated to adulterous behaviour or *para-dārañ ca gacchati*.

[We note with great lament that *kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī* has blunderingly gained worldwide acceptance today as sensual pleasure, [rejecting its one and only meaning sexual pleasure = methuna-samācāra], in works like BUDDHIST ETHICS by Hammalawa Saddhatissa, 1997, p.75 f. See DHARMA by Dhammavihari - 2006. Buddhist Cultural Centre. Sri Lanka, pp. 87- 93].

In Buddhist monasticism, nay in the whole of Buddhist religious thinking, *nekkhamma* stands in marked contrast to attachment to worldly or *samsāric* existence and continuance. On being initiated into Buddhism via the gradual process of the Noble Eightfold Path through *sammā-diṭṭhi* or corrected vision, one is reminded of and immediately introduced into the Buddhist way of thinking, as the precursor to acting, at the very second stage on the Path, viz. *sammā-sankappa*, i.e. corrected thought structuring. And this three-fold group of *sankappa* begins with *nekkhamma*, i.e. detachment or moving away from the customary sense gratification or *kāma*. On the other hand, the world does continually keep bombarding the humans with sense stimuli. This moving away necessarily is the commencement of the Path. The spirit of *nekkhamma* religiously commences the process of battling against the invariable processes of craving for and grasping at things of the world. That is *taṇhā* or thirsting for [in an idiomatic sense], leading to *upādāna* or grasping at. If this quality and spirit of renouncing is not properly acquired at the initial stage of religious life, while still being a lay householder, one can be declared as not having commenced the upward ascent on the path of religious living for self-liberation. That is why, in the life of a householder, the culture of the higher discipline of eight precepts or *aṭṭhanga-uposatha-sīla* is introduced, to be undertaken periodically, from one to four times a month, on specified days of the month called the *uposatha*. The Buddha insists that this should be an invariable must in the life of a lay householder, man or woman [AN. V. 83]. The failure to do so, the Buddha

stigmatises in no uncertain terms as being unfortunate [*dulladdhaṃ*] and miserable [*alābhā*].

What has been discussed so far as the preliminary grounding in moral goodness via the five precepts of the *pañca-sīla* and the upgrading of the religious disciplinary process via the periodic observance of the eight precepts of the *aṭṭhanga-uposatha-sīla* for these self same people is for us a clear enough indication as to what the spirit of Vinaya in Buddhism should be. Vinaya is nothing more or less than honest and forthright instruction and guidance for those who seek to achieve the final liberation out of the turmoil of *samsāric* continuance, without fortuitous meanderings in the believed to be happy states of existence in the heavenly worlds. Therefore the word *nibbuti* [*nir + vṛtī*], a word used as an equivalent of *nibbāna*, precisely means 'no more turning of the wheel of life'. These *sīla* bases with their essentially renunciatory character are to us the very foundation of the monastic discipline of Vinaya in Buddhism. Unlike the *sīlas*, the Vinaya has, vested in itself, the authority to prosecute and punish the deviants and the miscreants. It was indeed with this spirit in mind that at the text recitals during the First Buddhist Council, Vinaya was given precedence over Dhamma, saying that the 'Vinaya was the very life-blood of the Sāsana ...' [= *Vinayo nāma Buddha-sāsanassa āyu ...*], and that its proper maintenance guarantees the survival of the Sāsana: *Vinaye thite Sāsanaṃ thitaṃ hoti ++?*. For this, it was suggested that the recital of the Vinaya be taken up first. Records of legal proceedings at the Second Buddhist Council too, do indeed show that the Elders of the time did diligently use the Vinaya for this purpose in rejecting the newly introduced unacceptable practices.

Out of the vast body of *sīlas*, i.e. precepts which are meant to regulate the words and deeds of those who have opted a life of renunciation [*kāyika-vācasika-ajjhācāra-nisedhana*], certain relevant items are selected and graded according to the severity of their challenge to the opted spiritual life and social propriety. In the wake of this, penalties are prescribed, commencing with forthright expulsion

[Pārājkā] from the community. It is vital to note here that as against the universal ethic of respect for life [*pāṇātipātā-veramaṇī*] which heads all ethical considerations in Buddhism as a religion, monastic ethics of Buddhism show this considerable change of emphasis from respect for life to one of total removal from sexual life of household living. Monastic life requires total celibacy or *abrahmacariyā veramaṇī* as against the chaste sexual life of the virtuous householder [*kāmeu micchācārā veramaṇī*]. In the life of the householder, this change is effectively emphasised whenever changes are indicated in the direction of upward ascent from *pañca-sīla* to the periodic eightfold *aṭṭhanga-uposatha-sīla*, changing chastity to one of complete celibacy.

This placing of sexual indulgence precept of *methuna-dhamma* as No.1. in the list of Pārājikas, pushing the one on respect for life to the position No.3 is to be noted as a vital change of emphasis in Buddhist monastic philosophy. It is also to be noted that in the operation of the religio-legal disciplinary system of Buddhist monastic Vinaya, the Buddha would have thought it discreet to have the un-stinted support of the State legal machinery in the operation of his Buddhist monastic disciplinary set up. The Buddha, at one time, seems to have even consulted an ex-Minister of Legal Affairs who, by then had become a Buddhist disciple, on such matters [See Vin. III. 45].

At this stage, we would venture to examine whether the offence of sexual gratification, or any of the Pārājikas at that, [i.e. involving expulsion out of the community] had to be legally proved, with the admission of the offender, to be punishable within the Buddhist monastic community, with its own specific aspirations. The state law would and should go, as far as possible within its own perimeter, with legally established evidence, to prosecute and punish monastic offenders, in its own relevant areas of offences like man-slaughter. It is our opinion that in areas relevant to Pārājkā No. 1. items of sexual improprieties like rape and incest, and adulterous behaviour on the part of members of the Buddhist monastic community should come within the purview of state law for

prosecution and punishment, without any provision of immunity, these offences in themselves being challenges to the very spirit of monastic spiritual culture.

A point of further interest not to be missed here is the Buddha's clear differentiation in Pārājikā No. 3 of the concept of killing, keeping the destruction of human life in a class by itself, as distinct from that of animals. This is particularly in view of prosecution and punishment, alongside state law. Here again, we believe, is the need to be in conformity with the State law in determining the category of killing involved, differentiating between human and animal. But make no mistake. In the area of moral and spiritual development, while the Buddhist aspirant is on the Path, the attitude towards all grades of life, human and animal, has to be watched and developed, keeping within the frames of *avyāpāda-sankappa* and *avihimsā-sankappa* of the Eightfold Path, with unquestionable honesty and seriousness. This is what necessitates the intimation to the newly upgraded *upasampanna* monk, without any delay, the four *akaraṇīyāni* which insist that he cannot destroy the life even of a bed bug, or steal even a blade of grass. In Buddhist religio-spiritual culture, one works towards the achievement of the maximum and not the minimum as one's target.

These transgressions against the Codified Law or Pātimokkha, both of monks [Bhikkhus - 220] and nuns [Bhikhuṇis - 304], referred to as *āpatti* fall into seven categories of decreasing gravity. [For further details see Buddhist Monastic Discipline - Jotiya Dhirasekera, Ch. VIII]. Next to the most serious offences of Pārājikā which entail expulsion from the order of monks and nuns are the Sanghādisesa which are viewed as direct challenges to Buddhist monastic living [i.e. are violations of proper monastic behaviour]. The Vinaya requires that their commission be reported and confessed forthwith to fellow members of the Order. The complete recital of these lists of offences at the fortnightly gatherings or *pātimokkha + uddesa* was to serve this purpose of crime detection via honest personal confession and correction without any further damaging delay. But this seems to have gone out of vogue quite soon due to various reasons put forward

by various persons and groups and in its place a personal choice to discipline oneself in terms of the overall broad category of three-fold culture or *tisso sikkhā* seems to have had its approval: See *Tasmā't iha tvaṃ bhikkhu tīsu sikkhāsu sikkhassu ...* at AN. I.230.

Talking of the other groups of offences in their descending order of gravity, next to the Pārājikas, come the thirteen Sanghādisesas. The commission of these Sanghādisesa offences puts the miscreants immediately under six days of penitential deprivation [*chā' rattam mānattam*]. They shall temporarily lose their seniority within the community, like in sitting in the alms-hall, or in being served by junior monks. In case prompt confession is not made, the miscreant incurs another penalty called *parivāsa* for every day of concealment which has to be gone through first, prior to the winding-up penalty of the six-day *mānatta*.

Yet another group of offences which attract our attention in the Vinaya on account of their socio-economic vigilance over the behaviour of the monastic community in relation to the lay community is the *Nissaggiya Pācittiya* [i.e. offences which require having to surrender incorrectly acquired and kept personal possessions like robes and bowls to the collective pool of the Sangha community]. Wearing apparel [*cīvara*] for monks and nuns was not easy to get at in India at the time. It was by putting together discarded bits of cloth of diverse colours and texture in which dead bodies were wrapped, collected from cemeteries and charnel houses [*pamsu-kūla-cīvara*] that Buddhist monks made their robes for wearing and wrapping themselves. That is why these patchy multi-coloured robes had to be dyed with earth pigments and herbal dyes and made monochrome [*kāsāyāni* meaning dyed]. The monks needed three pieces of wearing apparel [*ti-cīvara*]. One to wear like a sarong to cover the lower half of the body [*antara-vāsakā*], another wrapper [*pārupana*] to cover the upper half and a third double lined thicker robe [*sanghātī*] for use in colder weather [See *Cīvara - Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*].

The bowls in which the monks ate their begged food were equally difficult to get at. The clay ones out of these were equally fragile and had to be handled with utmost care. Therefore the individual ownership of such items had to be kept at a minimum, reducing the burden on the supplier lay community at its lowest. The stories narrated in connection with many Nissaggiya Pācittiya rules reveal this aggressive monopolistic collectivist tendency on the part of many ill-disciplined groups of monks like the Chabbaggiyā [See for instance Nissaggiya XXX at Vin.III.265].

Buddhism was not anything delivered here on earth from elsewhere, through a human intermediary, under heavenly inspiration.

This is a vital reference and after years of research, we accept the reading *ubhato vinaye* [and not *ubhato vibhange* of the Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti text] as correctly summing up what was gone through under the Vinaya recital by Venerable Thera Maha Kassapa and Thera Upali at the First Buddhist Council.

Commentator Buddhaghosa also in his Introductions to the Commentaries on the Dhamma, the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma furnishes us with valuable information on many areas of Pali Buddhist literature. In a discussion which follows, we indicate below why we reject the reading *ubhato vibhange* which the Burmese Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā has put forward and Sri Lanka has accepted.

Over the centuries, serious errors in the understanding of the Vinaya and its enforcement and implementation seem to have crept into the institution of the Buddhist Sangha. In recent years, we have attempted to clarify a few such errors [some of them, like the sub-rule to the third Pārājikā that a *bhikkhu* who commits suicide is guilty only of a *dukkaṭa* offence is more than a thousand year old blunder which is current in Sri Lanka: *na bhikkhave attānam pātetabbam. Yo pāteyya āpatti dukkaṭassa* [Vin. III. 82]. The Sinhala text of 1959 [BJTS I. p.181] translates this as `Mahaṇeni ātma-ghātanaya no kaṭayutuyi. Yamek ātma-ghātanaya kerenam dukulā aevaet ve'.

This idea of suicide which has been mysteriously smuggled in to the Sinhala translation of Pārājikā Pāli has its parallel in the Sri Lankan Vinaya book Sika Valanda Vinisa [of about early tenth century A.D.]. Whether this unacceptably warped tradition of suicide of the Sika Valanda Vinisa is of native Sri Lankan origin and latterly contaminated the Sinhala translation of the Canonical Vinaya text Pārājikā Pāli in Sri Lanka or *vice versa* is yet to be researched into. Neither Thailand nor Myanmar seem to know anything like it.

For this reason, we hold the view that at the recital of Buddhist texts at the First Buddhist Council [i.e. *pañcasatī sangitī*], the recital of Vinaya texts by Thera Upali, under the direction of Thera Mahā Kassapa, would have included both these groups under *ubhato vinaye* [and certainly not as *ubhato vibhanga* which shuts out the Khandhaka Vinaya of the Mahāvagga Pāli and Cullavagga Pāli]. Note that the pre-Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā Sri Lankan Tripiṭaka Pali texts in Sinhala characters as well as PTS texts in Roman characters carry the reading *ubhato vinaye*. PTS Vinaya II, 287 has *eten'eva upāyena ubhato vinaye pucchi*. Bentara Saddhātissa - Cullavagga Pali (1910 edition) and Malalasekera - Cullavagga Pali (1955 edition) both carry the pre-Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā reading *ubhato vinaye*. For some mysterious reason, the Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti Tripiṭaka editors have pushed aside their original Sinhala script reading *ubhato vinaye* to the position of a foot note (*sī*) and adopted in their new Buddha Jayanti edition of Sri Lanka this Myanmar Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā reading *ubhato vibhange* [See BJTS (5.2.) of 1983, p.550].

f.n. 1. For a comprehensive study of Vinaya, see Buddhist Monastic Discipline by Jotiya Dhirasekera [presently Ven. Bhikkhu Dhammavihari]. First edition 1982 and second edition 2007. Buddhist Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka. See specially 2007 Second Ed. p. 24 where a further note on this subject is added.

It is by no means a union with a Power or Person beyond the human such as *sa-lokatā, sa-yujyatā, sa-ātmātā*.

Foot note: For further details see Buddhist Monastic Discipline - Jotiya Dhirasekera, First ed, 1982 p. 46 ff. / Second ed. 2007. p. 85 ff. See also Vin.III. p.18 ff.

Foot note: [Vin. III. 21. See also Buddhist Monastic Discipline. First ed. p. 51f. / Second ed. p. 93f.]

On the other hand we should also take note here of the Cullavagga account of the First Buddhist Council [Vin.II. 287]. No attempt is made here to name any specific texts under the Vinaya recital, its entire contents being brought under the designation of *ubhato vinaya* [PTS and Cambodian text reading. See also Buddhist Monastic Discipline. First edition p.79 n.3 / Second edition p. 149 n. 3]. We presume *ubhato* implies `of both Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni'. *Vinaya* here has to be taken to include both the Vibhaṅga (Mahā-vibhaṅga and Bhikkhuni-vibhaṅga) as well as the Khandhakas, possibly in their initial, rudimentary form. We reject the Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti Tripiṭaka Series - Volume 5 (2), of 1983, p. 550, reading *vibhaṅge* for *vinaye* which would totally exclude the Khandhaka Vinaya. [We are aware of the existence in Sri Lanka of a 1910 edition of the Cullavagga by Bentara Saddhatissa Thera which reads *ubhato vinaye*, in total agreement with PTS and Cambodian texts.] It is important to note here that in the samples given here in the Cullavagga of the work recited under Vinaya we discover portions even of the detailed work, the Suttavibhaṅga and not merely the bare code, the Pātimokkha.

Note a very serious error of interpretation of this in Hammalawa Saddhatissa's BUDDHIST ETHICS, Wisdom Publications - 1970, 1997, 2003 at p. 80. This is what he says:

" Regarding the length of time during which the eight precepts should be observed, though the keeping may be periodical and therefore constitute periodical virtue (*kālapariyanta-sīla*), Buddhaghosa says: In the fifth dyad periodical virtue is that undertaken after deciding on a time limit. Lifelong Sīla



(*āpāṇakoṭika-sīla*) is that practiced in the same way but undertaken for as long as life lasts. *Aṭṭha sīla* is therefore of two kinds, periodical and lifelong."

**But we disagree. We are certain that Buddhaghosa himself is and has to be** adequately familiar with the above quoted Canonical reference which specifically presents the *Aṭṭhanga-sīla* as *Uposatha-sīla*, to be undertaken on the four specified days of the moon, i.e. the *uposatha* days [*uposatham upavaseyya*], and to be observed during a complete period of day and night [*imañ ca divasaṃ imañ ca rattim*], i.e. for twenty-four hours. And for no less under any circumstances. He also could make no mistake of making what is given by the Buddha as a *uposatha sīla* to be a lifelong one. As far as we can discern, what Buddhaghosa is doing in the *Visuddhimagga* [p.12] under his two-fold studies or *dukas* is not a division of the *aṭṭhanga-sīla* into two, but a division of the totality of *sīlas* in Buddhism, i.e. *pañca-sīla* as a lifelong one for everybody everywhere and the *aṭṭhanga-sīla* as a time-determined [*pariyanta-kata*] *uposatha-sīla* on specified *uposatha* days as opted by the householders.

